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The Abnormal Thing

Or, THE LAST DINOSAUR

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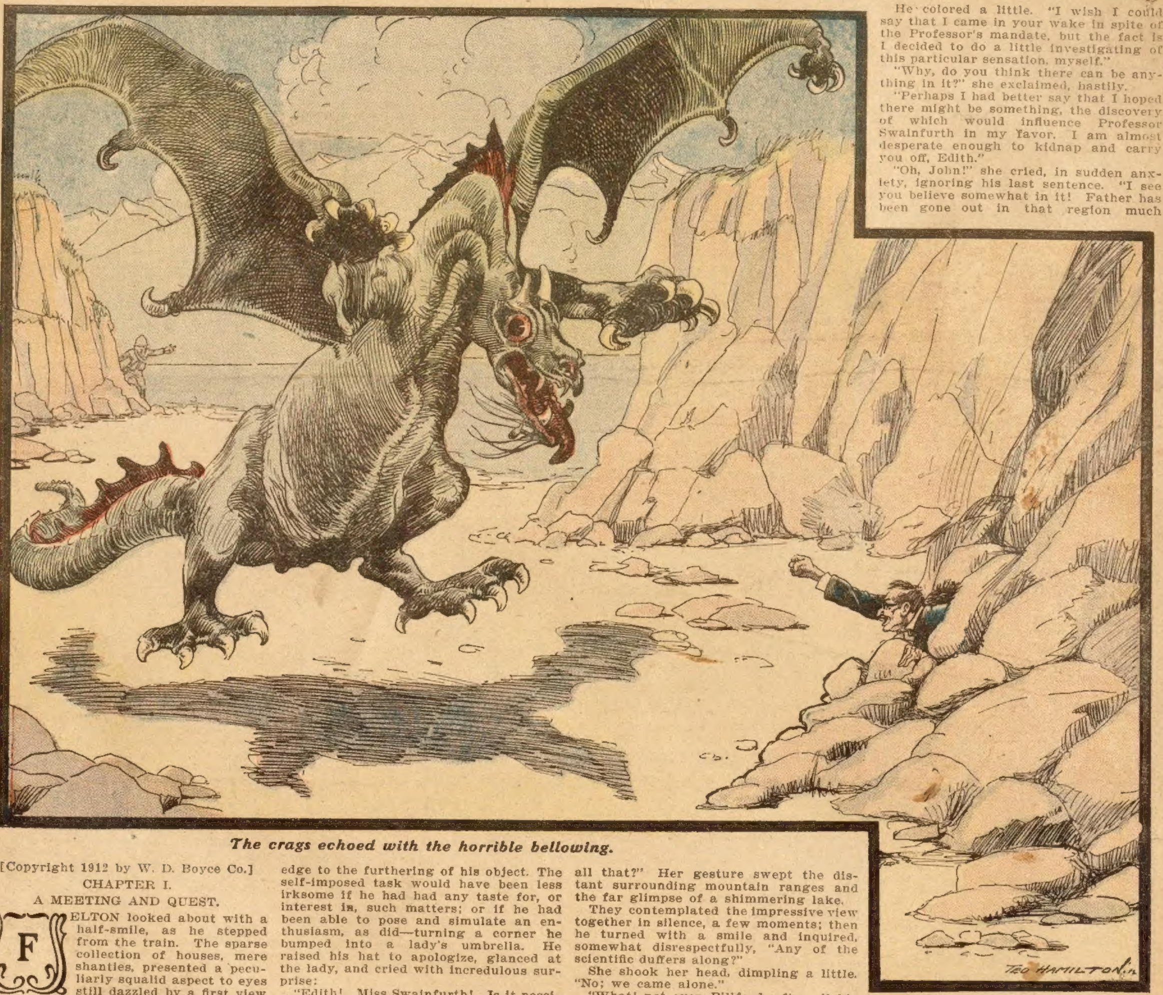

The crags echoed with the horrible bellowing.

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CHAPTER I.

A MEETING AND QUEST.

FELTON looked about with a half-smile, as he stepped from the train. The sparse collection of houses, mere shanties, presented a peculiarly squalid aspect to eyes still dazzled by a first view of the stupendous works of the Great Architect of the Universe.

While traveling through the league on league of mighty mountain vastness, scarcely touched by puny man, the story that had crept into an Eastern paper did not seem so preposterous, or unbelievable. Ten thousand prehistoric monsters might lurk in ten thousand inaccessible lairs, and ages pass with their presence unsuspected, unless revealed by accident, such as was now reported.

While having little faith in the truth of the story, which, nevertheless might have something unusual for a foundation, he had come to investigate quietly, making this hamlet his headquarters. He acknowledged to himself, before starting, that the expedition was but a forlorn hope, all other means of obtaining his heart's desire having failed. Should he find indications of even the slightest truth in the tale, which seemed impossible, he meant to use his knowledge to the furthering of his object. The self-imposed task would have been less irksome if he had had any taste for, or interest in, such matters; or if he had been able to pose and simulate an enthusiasm, as did—turning a corner he bumped into a lady's umbrella. He raised his hat to apologize, glanced at the lady, and cried with incredulous surprise:

"Edith! Miss Swainfurth! Is it possible!"

The lady stared at him, rubbed her eyes, looked about her and back at his face. "Yes," she murmured, "I am here, thousands of miles from the pink tea, where I saw you last. I think I should say, John—Mr. Felton—'Is it possible!' seeing that I was here first."

"But you cannot imagine how astonished I am at finding you here!" he exclaimed.

"Knowing father, you should not be astonished at finding me anywhere," she laughed.

"Do you mean that he also saw that story and has come to investigate?" he asked, a shade of chagrin in his tone.

"He did, and he has; and of course I must come with him, according to his latest whim, for my protection." Her mischievous glance at him indicated the quarter from which her father wished to protect her, and she added: "But I have not regretted the trip. How can I, with all that?" Her gesture swept the distant surrounding mountain ranges and the far glimpse of a shimmering lake.

They contemplated the impressive view together in silence, a few moments; then he turned with a smile and inquired, somewhat disrespectfully, "Any of the scientific duffers along?"

She shook her head, dimpling a little. "No; we came alone."

"What! not even Billford, after all his posing——"

She interrupted with a merry laugh: "When father insisted that he traipse off alone in the wilderness—we were not coming, unless his report warranted it, as father did not want to leave his work—in search of the prehistoric, Mr. Billford speedily lost his enthusiasm for scientific research. I think he was considerably jolted by the outcome." She laughed again, reminiscently.

He brightened and took her hand.

"Oh, matters haven't changed in the least as far as you are concerned, John. Father will not hear you mentioned, and I have been expecting to be obliged to pledge myself to eternal celibacy, he is so rabid against the 'frivolous young men of the present generation.'"

They exchanged smiles at the familiar sentiment; then she asked, as if just perceiving that his presence also demanded explanation:

"But you! What brings you here?"

He colored a little. "I wish I could say that I came in your wake in spite of the Professor's mandate, but the fact is I decided to do a little investigating of this particular sensation, myself."

"Why, do you think there can be anything in it?" she exclaimed, hastily.

"Perhaps I had better say that I hoped there might be something, the discovery of which would influence Professor Swainfurth in my favor. I am almost desperate enough to kidnap and carry you off, Edith."

"Oh, John!" she cried, in sudden anxiety, ignoring his last sentence. "I see you believe somewhat in it! Father has been gone out in that region much longer than he intended to be when he started. He wouldn't take a person with him; he didn't want it known what he came for—and he may have run across that horrible monster and been——" She stopped with a half-sob.

"Oh, your father knows how to take care of himself. Think how he has trotted through South American forests, sprinted across Asian deserts, and waded through Arctic snows with never a scratch. I get the worst of it! He'll find out everything for himself, if there is anything to find out, and I can go hang!" he said, ruefully. "I might as well go back at once; he won't leave even a fossil bone or tooth for me to discover, and that's about all I expected to round up, anyway."

"But the terrible sounds, and reports of a living horror," she reminded him, tentatively.

"The bellowing might easily be the wind roaring around crags and booming through caverns — impressive, even frightful sounds to unaccustomed ears; and a scared man sees—most anything. But if you are really anxious about your father, I will hunt him up, though I expect he'll be something of a monster himself when he finds I have seen you in spite of his commands."

Miss Swainfurth was really anxious, and had been considering the possibility of obtaining help and going in search of her father herself, if he did not return soon; and she gratefully accepted Felton's offer, giving him such information of the locality he intended searching as she had gathered from her father's talk.

Felton learned considerably more by casually interviewing several of the older and more talkative of the villagers, which his training as a reporter enabled him to do without arousing suspicions as to his object and intentions. The newspaper story had, apparently, not been seen by them, but they discussed freely the superstitious fear with which the Indians regarded the short, commanding, but isolated mountain range at the head of the lake; and their belief that it was the home of demons and evil spirits. Now and then, a white man, looking for indications of gold in the outskirts of the range, had mentioned hearing unusual sounds, but they had been attributed to the wind, and no one had ever cared to investigate the real origin of them.

"If there'd a been reason to think there was gold in them great rock piles, the whole range'd been run over 'fore this, devils or no," one old man laughed contemptuously, with a gesture toward the mountains, the others echoing the laugh. They were contemptuous also, in their estimate of Professor Swainfurth, considering him but a "daffy old rock breaker," and predicting that he'd lose himself "off there," finding out how the world was made. One hinted, with a wink and a grin, that the old greeny was maybe prospecting for gold in the barrens.

Felton considered it improbable that Professor Swainfurth was lost, for, though he seemed always peering at the world though the dust of antiquity, he had often declared that in his many wanderings he had never missed his way. Moreover, he carried with him, as a matter of course, a small kit of instruments for ascertaining direction, altitude, temperature, and other things necessary to the successful pursuit of his calling. His detention now, so much beyond the limit set for his return, was due to accident, Felton believed, and he determined quietly to hunt him up. If he was merely absorbed in geologic observation, he would be greatly exasperated at being made the object of a sensational search. Time enough for that when his own efforts had failed, if fail they should, which he did not anticipate.

Therefore, prepared for several days' outing, and glowing with Edith's warmly expressed gratitude, Felton, at daylight next morning, set out upon a journey resulting in a series of adventures and discoveries beyond his wildest imaginings.

A couple of hours' swift travel put him into the primordial wilderness, with no more sight nor sign of humanity than if he were the sole specimen on earth. Realizing his isolation, a feeling of awe crept over him as he neared the towering, bewildering maze of wild, unexplored loneliness. He clung to the lake as to a friendly hand, for by following its margin he would eventually come around to a point from whence he could reach the railroad, even though it took weeks. In places he waded in shallow water, and again climbed a ragged bluff, but for the most part the narrow beach made travel easy and rapid. Toward night he took his bearings from the summit of a cliff, to see if he were yet nearing the region where he might reasonably hope to find the Professor, if he found him at all; and discovered, far ahead, an island, which, from its apparent size and position, he decided to be the one, that, according to the story, marked the haunts of the monster. It seemed that by an extra spurt he might reach the island by sundown; but, though skeptical as to there being a monster of any sort, he still hesitated to approach the vicinity very closely at night, and finally halted at what he deemed a judicious distance.

He was no sportsman, and no great shot, but in the day's tramp through the mountain wastes he had seen no signs of wild beasts, and felt comparatively safe in the cavelike cleft he found in the rocky wall, although somewhat nervous at thought of possible prowling mountain lions.

He was not disturbed, however, except by a sound, which to his sleep-dulled consciousness seemed a heavy sighing and moaning from the heights above and beyond him, and which he laid entirely to the haunting memory of the fervid account he had read.

Although a trained athlete, he found himself somewhat stiff in the morning from the unaccustomed climbing; but a plunge in the lake put him in a glow, and he set off briskly, keeping watch for the Professor, beginning to understand something of the magnitude of his undertaking as he observed the gorges and canyons, up any one of which the man he sought might be wandering. Still, it was reasonable to suppose that the Professor would visit the locality about the island before going off into the mountains, and traces of him might be found there.

The beach widened, perpendicular cliffs jutted out, their bared foundations presenting curious and alluring formations, and Felton discovered several freshly broken, splintered points. He was examining these, when the hoarse moaning he had fancied a part of his uneasy dreams suddenly roared and echoed from the rocky steeps beyond him.

He was astounded—affrighted even! This was not the wild dirge of the wind through immense, cloud-hidden caverns, nor the thunder of an avalanche. It was a Voice—unmistakably, a Voice!

His skin crept into goose-flesh at this significant intimation that the monster was no mere myth. Pictures of hideous, reconstructed geological specimens, which he had hitherto considered with amusement as being the product of man's fantastic imagination, now stood out as terrible, living realities, with that overwhelming sound rending the quiet morning air.

There flashed across his mind a wonder at the daring of the small, wizened, nearsighted Professor, who alone, and beyond the hope of human help, had invaded the haunts of the Creature possessing that tremendous Voice and also that a Creature capable of such immense vocalization should have remained undiscovered, even in this bleak wilderness. Yet, of course, the dreadful sound had been a protection to it, in imparting to the region an atmosphere of mystery. It fully explained the Indian belief in the evil spirits, even without the monster ever having been seen; but one, at least, of the originators of the latest story had imagined a huge living shape among the writhing clouds that crowned the lofty summits.

Although he would have much preferred leaving the mystery unsolved, as had others, Felton felt compelled to make the effort to learn the fate of Edith's father, and cautiously advanced, skulking close to the sheltering cliffs, following their sinuous windings until at last the mountains suddenly swept back, leaving a wide, bowlder-strewn beach. Opposite a mighty, snow-crowned mountain, monarch of the range, lay the island, its shores washed by the dimpling waves, glistening in the morning sun. Monarch mountain, island, bay, all as in the report—this was the spot! At the instant the thunderous bellowings burst out with tenfold intensity, rolling along the beach, and echoing from a hundred peaks and crags. It was overwhelming!

Felton flattened on the sand, waiting in breathless expectancy the appearance of the monster, the nearness of the sound proclaiming its immediate proximity. The bellowing dropped into rumblings as of distant thunder, sank to muffled mutterings, and at last died away; and after an anxious interval, Felton began a slow retrograde movement from his exposed position upon the beach, not daring to rise to his feet until he had reached some large bowlders near the cliff.

Chancing to look down, he made a discovery that forced from him a shocked cry!

CHAPTER II.

NOT A SENSATIONAL STORY.

There, plainly outlined in the sand, were the prints of human feet—the Professor's!—and accompanying them, marks which, when he had studied them out, proved to be other footprints, so large, so strange, that at first he had not recognized them as such. He gazed at them in amazement! What must be the size, the bulk of the creature, or beast, that had sunk those monstrous claws, or toes so deeply into the sand? It had stalked the Professor! Shuddering at the unfinished thought he went back to the broken point of rock, searching for the first trace of footsteps.

He had been too much overwhelmed by the portentous sounds to think of looking for them before, especially as there had been none heretofore discernible. The Professor had come out on the beach near the broken point, and Felton soon found the beginning of his trail from the canyon. Following it, he found where the Professor had kneeled, leaving the marks of knees and toes, while he evidently examined more closely some formation that had attracted his attention; and—a few yards back began the awful tracks!

Where had the creature come from? They began abruptly. Could it be possible that the enormous beast did fly—had wings sufficiently powerful to carry such a burden? Either that, or it had leaped from the towering crag above, for his closest search failed to find any indications of its having approached from any direction. This bore out the story, and as Felton recalled the particulars of the account, he looked apprehensively at the heights about and above him. More than ever, he felt like stealing away and leaving the monster to his haunts, and again he was impelled, by the wish, necessity even, of determining if possible whether the Professor were still living, and if help could reach him.

Slowly following the awful tracks, Felton read the pitiful story: The absorbed Professor, peering through his glasses unconscious of the monster stealing upon him; then, suddenly alarmed, he had dashed away in long leaps in a race for life—a race useless and hopeless with such a pursuer. The tracks disappeared around a projecting crag, and not daring to follow farther, Felton shrank into a friendly cavity in the rocky wall and considered.

It seemed useless foolhardiness to go on and expose himself to the fate that had undoubtedly overtaken Professor Swainfurth. Perhaps he could not even now escape; the monster might appear at any moment. His only chance was to creep slowly and silently along the base of the cliffs until he was at a distance from the dangerous place. He groaned at thought of imparting to Edith the shocking news; but he vowed that her father should be avenged, if he called upon the Government to destroy the horrible beast.

Long he crouched close, afraid to move and unashamed of his fear. He could face the known however terrifying, but this unknown horror he, or any man, was justified in fearing. But he must make an effort to escape, and he started, crawling on all fours, when a roar from behind the crag sent him scuttling back to the crevice, where he crouched, expecting the beast to burst upon him.

Instead, the roar diminished to the hoarse muttering, and, astonished beyond belief, wondering if he were in his senses, he imagined he caught the sound of a human voice mingling with it! The muttering sank to a spasmodic snuffle and whimper, and the voice became plainly evident, a tantalizing, sarcastic voice punctured with spurts of strident laughter. The Professor—or his spirit! A few moments' listening assured Felton that it was the man himself, in the flesh, and with the knowledge of the presence of another human being, his fears dropped from him and his courage returned.

That the Professor was very much alive, even enjoying the situation, soon became apparent to Felton. It was as if he had, somehow, got the better of the beast, and was crowing over it. With curiosity at a high pitch, Felton inched forward, the sulky whine and jeering voice growing louder, until he could distinguish words, a flow of geological names or terms, applied as derogatory epithets. He listened, astonished, while the Professor, having worsted his enemy in the vocal strife, in spite of its greater volume, openly derided it.

"H-e-y!" he squealed. "You lob-sided, trillion-year-old Pterodactylant! Snort and snuffle, and gnash and bellow as much as you please! You've got to wait a while yet before you crunch me between your snaggly grinders! You wall-eyed Jurassic conglomeration! You Theriodontic-Ichthyosaurus-Swainfurthia reptile! And you needn't think I'm the only man in the world, either! You can eat me, if you can get me, but you'll be mounted yet, and labeled, and exhibited, and stared at by gaping multitudes, and they won't find a beauty spot in your whole carcass, you leathery mixture of bird, beast and lizard! But ugly as you are, you are mine, and there's not money enough on this planet to buy you. Oh you'd like some more would you? Here's for you then! Ha! ha!" His thin laughter soared above the bellows that burst out.

Felton smiled at the nonsensical tirade, although he had, so shortly before, never expected to smile again. Professor Swainfurth did not seem to be very much injured even, whatever predicament he was in; and he was evidently out of reach of the beast, for the present, though perhaps unable to escape. From the graphic personal remarks he continued to hurl at his enemy, Felton gathered that the creature was both grotesque and hideous. Finally the Professor cackled triumphantly:

"Given it up again, have you, old Granddaddy Dinosaur? Hippity-hop! There you go! Oh, if I had my glasses! Call again; I'm always in! H-e-y, up you go! You're a bird!" Then he commented to himself, "I'd let you eat me, and welcome, if I could introduce you to the world first, just as you are."

A silence followed, and after waiting for some time, while no more sounds came from the creature, Felton crawled forward, his revolver ready. He felt braver with it in his hand, although he did not expect that the beast would stop for a dozen bullets, should he try it. Around the crag was another large bay with a broader beach heaped with bowlders from the mountainsides. Far up toward the top of the mighty peak that towered over and back of the lower mountains bordering on the lake, Felton saw a great moving blotch—the beast returning to his lair. Now was his time, and leaping up he ran around the crag, softly calling Professor Swainfurth.

"Say, look out there, Felton! You're almost on them. Bring them to me, will you? Look out, don't break them!" Swainfurth's voice warned and requested in a breath, and an arm extended itself from beneath a huge pile of bowlders heaped against the perpendicular cliff.

Felton found the glasses and put them into the hand, which was withdrawn, and an instant later the Professor's face appeared, wearing the articles and a look of satisfaction.

"Thank you," he said. "Now I'll be able to see him plainly when he returns. How the unwieldy creature has managed to amble about so much without crushing them is a wonder."

"Are you hurt, Professor Swainfurth, and unable to escape?" Felton asked.

"Before we enter into explanations you had better, perhaps, find a shelter. He appears most unexpectedly at times, and it would be somewhat disturbing to me to witness him feasting upon you, although I would thereby learn his manner of feeding."

Before this characteristic speech was half through, Felton had made himself less conspicuous and looked about for a hiding-place.

"A few yards to my right, you will find a cavity beneath the bowlders, larger I think, than this. I tried to reach it, as it is easier of entrance, but had not time."

The cavity was altogether too open to afford the concealment Felton thought desirable in the presence of such a beast, but he quickly blocked the long aperture with small bowlders, and crawled within.

"I have had the most wonderful experience and privilege ever accorded to man," the Professor proclaimed with emphatic gratification, in his lecture voice. "With my own eyes, again and again, I have leisurely contemplated, studied a living creature which is undoubtedly millions of years old, and also, undoubtedly, the only one in existence. It is unbelievable! Without the evidence of the creature's bodily presence, I should not expect the most liberal scientist to credit it—I could not, I am afraid, myself."

By projecting his head, Felton could see Swainfurth's shiny pate and bushy fringe projecting from his kennel, his glowing face turned watchfully toward the distant lair.

"But, Professor," Felton demanded, "why have you stayed here so long? Couldn't you slip away from him? You surely couldn't have been afraid of his changing his location while you were away, after living here for ages." Felton laughed.

"I find it impossible to disengage my left limb, which was caught in some way by the bowlders which were displaced when the creature sprang upon them, as I disappeared underneath."

"And you have been suffering with a crushed limb all this time!" Felton exclaimed.

"Oh, it is not to say, painful, and I think it is not much hurt. I can turn a little, but find it impossible to extricate myself. It is fortunate that I am so placed that I have an unobstructed view of the entire beach, the opposite spur of mountains, and also of the lofty peak where the creature seems to have its lair, probably in some immense cavern. He has not the intelligence of most of our now existing animals, else he would have had me out long ago. I question if he could contrive to get at me when I could no longer protect myself. He seems to have a faint idea at times that it might be done, but instead of demolishing my shelter, which he could readily do, he always snuffles threateningly about the opening where he can see me. You will perceive, by his track, that he cannot introduce one of his astonishing paws into the aperture, and pull me out."

"You spoke of protecting yourself—do you mean by throwing stones?" Felton asked, if the beast could be driven off so easily he was not to be feared.

"Stones!" the Professor laughed. "When you see him, you'll understand that no stone I could throw would affect him in the least. I have with me a flask of pungent, powerful, volatile liquid, and the device for projecting it in a fine spray, a preparation I use to render harmless unpleasant specimens I wish to capture or handle. I was driven to try it upon the creature and found that a small quantity, if it could be made to reach his eye, or nostril, was sufficient to make him draw back, grumbling. He seems to find the fumes very disagreeable." The Professor smiled.

This explained the peculiar, pervasive odor about the vicinity, which Felton had attributed to the beast itself.

"How long have you been in there?" Felton asked.

"This is the fourth day."

"But food, and drink! You must be nearly starved."

"I am always prepared for emergencies," the Professor returned with dignity. "My pack, fortunately, was strapped on firmly, and I did not lose it, though my field glasses were broken and I lost my spectacles, in my haste, also my notebook, which last the creature swallowed. I had a metal case of a thirst-reducing compound, and a quantity of food capsules upon which life can be sustained indefinitely; but my entire supply was necessarily small, and is well-nigh exhausted. As it seemed probable that I should not be able to make known my wonderful discovery to the world, in person, I have endeavored, with my indelible pencil, to leave upon the smooth bowlders within my reach some record of my marvelous experience, and such of the personal appearance and characteristics of this prehistoric wonder as I have been able to distinguish without my glasses, with my name and the date of my discovery of this living relic of far-gone ages, hoping posterity would some time come upon them, and give me the credit that is rightfully my due. Rightfully, I repeat; for without my credulity and effort, he might have passed out of existence, having been no more to the world than the myth he has been heretofore." The Professor's tone had become anxious, insistent, defiant, as if he were arguing his claim before that future discoverer, whom he feared would rob him. Recalling himself to the present and changed circumstances, he added: "But by your timely arrival I shall be able to present to the scientific world ——" He stopped, startled by a new and disturbing thought.

"Felton," he cried, "I was here days before you! I alone ventured into the haunts of this beast, which has been a mystery and a terror, making this region a spot to be feared and shunned by all human beings! I faced this monstrous, unknown creature alone, upon his own ground! I might well have perished for my boldness! I will not be deprived of an atom of my right in this discovery! You have followed, me stolen upon me, and learned my——"

"Professor Swainfurth," Felton interrupted, impatiently, "what I am most interested in is the question of our getting away. I don't care a fig for the beast, or whether he was ever discovered or not. Isn't it possible for me to pry off the bowlders and get you out? I'm going to try, anyway."

"You'll stay where you are at present," the Professor said, sharply. "He's coming again, down the gorge. Now I'll have a clear and comprehensive view of him. And Felton, you'd better not speak. He may locate you if you do, and it will be harder for you to get away."

That sounded as if the Professor expected it would require help to extricate him; and Pelton saw that his own chance of getting away safely would be much better if the beast did not know of his presence.

CHAPTER III.

THE "ABNORMAL THING."

The beast announced his approach by a raucous bellow, and when he presently came into sight, Felton ducked back into the deeper shadows, with a smothered cry.

All the efforts of man's heated imagination to portray the hideous, the grotesque: all the creations of the most fever-heated nightmare, dwindled to nothingness before this great, unwieldy monster, coming in long, kangaroolike leaps, its huge, bat-shaped wings half extended, aiding its locomotion, its upreared snout so high as to be out of the range of Felton's restricted vision.

As it neared them, it dropped to all fours with a mushy thud, its hind legs, which were much the longest, doubling under it to the knees, and Felton pinched himself, half doubting if he were awake, though never dream so hideous had punished him.

To his starting eyes it seemed hundreds of feet from the end of the long snout to the blunt tip of the lizardlike tail. Its immense, rotund body was covered with thick rolls of grimy, repulsive hide, that seemed to have been decorated with scales, now entirely lost save in occasional, rough, unsightly, glistening patches. Two ghastly eyes, the size of tea plates, glassy, protuberant, expressionless, were situated far apart on either side of the broad, flat head, a yard or more from the end of the snout; and above each one was a short, blunt horn. The great mouth, with catlike whiskers above it, yawned, disclosing yellow, uneven snags of teeth, licked at intervals by a thick, rasping tongue. It breathed audibly, in puffs and wheezy grunts. It waddled clumsily about, and finally crouched on the ground in front of the Professor's refuge.

"He seems capable of learning by experience," Felton thought, noting that it had taken a position at a safe distance from Swainfurth's squirt; "and that denotes intelligence, though not what one might reasonably expect from the time he has had to grow wise in. But great Jupiter! he must he creation's practical joke—the limit of grotesque, horrible, ugliness! And there doesn't seem to be a drop of warm, red, blood in the huge clammy-looking mass. Blood wasn't invented, probably, when he was put together, or his has congealed in the millions of years since."

The creature had no resemblance to any known living organism, yet there seemed abundant vitality, life. On what had it lived? How was it possible for such an immense creature to find sufficient food? Was it carnivorous, as its eager pursuit of the Professor seemed to indicate? Above all, how had it managed to survive the extreme changes that had passed over its venerable head?

Felton asked himself these, and a hundred other unanswerable questions as he stared at the abnormal Thing. Abnormal Thing! That was all that could be said of it by the wisest. No man knew, or could know, the genesis and genealogy of it, and even an attempt to classify and explain, seemed to him vain and presumptuous.

The Professor, with sight reinforced by his glasses, was crooning a happy epic upon the wonderful object before him, with much the self-gratulation of a creator. While warning Felton to remain silent and quiet, he administered to him large doses of geological lore, in the probable history and antecedents of his discovery. His discovery! and he declared again and again that whatever name the combined wisdom and knowledge of the scientific world bestowed upon it, one of them should be Swainfurthia, in commemoration of his services to mankind, and thus hand down his fame to all future ages. His voice rose in his rhapsody, and the beast, as if sharing his excitement, began a whining, thickly nasal accompaniment, which soon almost drowned the Professor's thin solo.

It got to its feet and lumbered awkwardly about, swinging its great head as Felton remembered the bears at the zoo doing. The Professor had spoken of it as ambling, which presupposes some ease of movement; but a stiff lumbering seemed to Felton the better term, and watching it, he decided that it would not be impossible to escape from it by swift dodging.

The creature turned toward the lake, the overgrown whine dropping to a mumbling, husky grumble, and Swainfurth, who appeared to take great delight in addressing it, thrust out his head and sent after it a vituperative monologue, covering the whole of his acquaintance with it, from the moment when he had discovered it skulking in his wake. He scorned it for having kept a cowardly silence, that it might make a sneaking attack upon a comparatively insignificant atom, and jeeringly foretold its subjection to the atom, when he should become possessed with what he called his "little quieters," the mention of which suddenly diverted the vituperative stream upon himself for having forgetten them.

Felton was agape with astonishment at the linguistic proficiency of one, who, in ordinary life, expressed himself in the briefest manner possible, as if finding words difficult.

The Thing suddenly changed its mind and its course, and bounded back to the Professor with a nimbleness and velocity that caused Felton to hastily reconsider the practicability of dodging it. Snuffling, it thrust its snout against the opening, whence had emerged the Professor's head a moment before. Then the pungent odor again defiled the air, and again the crags echoed with the horrible bellowing and roaring of rage, punctured by the Professor's laughter and taunts.

The creature finally turned sulkily to the lake, wading in deeper and deeper, until the water closed over it. Felton watched the ripples traveling along, until a bend in the shore hid them; then he crawled out and hastened to attempt the liberation of the imprisoned Professor.

"Don't touch a stone, nor a bowlder!" Swainfurth commanded. "You must set out at once for the village and get such things as I shall designate, and hasten back with them."

"And leave you here?" Felton cried.

"I am all right. Good for another week if necessary!" Swainfurth declared, impatiently. "It is of the utmost importance that I have certain articles speedily. Have you a bit of paper on which to make a list?"

On searching, Felton discovered that he had somehow lost his notebook, but produced letters and cards. The Professor accepted a card, saying:

"That will do. You had better conceal yourself while I make out a list. If our friend spies you, his attentions may hamper your movements."

Felton laughed, feeling himself something of a coward as he stretched flat in the accommodating burrow; but hardly had he done so, when the creature unexpectedly and nimbly leaped around the bend in the cliffs, some distance up the shore, with two small animals frisking, doglike, about it.

"Aha!" Swainfurth cried. "I did not hope he would exhibit his pets to you."

"Pets!" Felton shouted.

"Hu-sh! Yes, they appear to be his pets, or playthings. I cannot quite determine, without a close examination, what the little creatures are, but he seems to amuse himself with their antics."

Wide-eyed, Felton gazed at the strange performance given upon the sand. The two small animals, swift and agile, played around the monster, sweeping about him in ever-narrowing circles, till they darted beneath him, nipping at the thick legs and stamping feet; around and around, leaping the dragging tail and swinging snout, even flashing almost into the ponderous, snapping jaws, as if in derision; and always the nipping, teasing, fleeting snatching at any part as they passed. They sprang upon the beast's snout, and chased each other up and down the broad back; their shrill yelps accentuating his heavy roars; the great creature turned from side to side, as if bewildered by the gliding forms. Felton was convinced that the agile mites were amusing themselves by teasing the creature whose huge bulk enabled them easily to evade his effort to catch them. At last the monster ended it by taking to flight, which it did by rearing on its hind legs and gathering momentum by the accelerating, kangaroolike leaps, or hops, bounding each time higher, with flapping wings, until it soared away.

"I think, if you hurry, you can get off now," the Professor called.

"I'm going to bring you my blanket and haversack of food first. You need them."

"You'll fool away your opportu——"

Felton did not stop to argue, but sprinted away, keeping close to the rock wall, and was soon back with the articles. Swainfurth put them aside as if of little consequence. He was boiling with impatience, and excited to an alarming degree by a thought that had occurred to him.

"Felton," he shrieked, "You are not to tell a soul, not a living soul, that you have seen—what I have discovered! I cannot help your knowing, but none other shall until I will it! Swear, on your honor—by all you hold dear that you will tell no one—no one at all! Swear!" he commanded, waving aside Felton's attempt to speak, his eyes glaring. Thus compelled Felton lifted his right hand, as directed, and repeated the stringent oath solemnly administered to him by the Professor.

"Now hasten! and do not omit an article I have named."

"But cameras may not be obtainable in that fag-end of civilization," Felton intimated.

"True," Swainfurth assented. "Though I recall seeing one in the possession of a youth—but he may have left, or would be unpleasantly curious. Then if you must, omit it. Hasten now—remember your oath! Hasten! He is already returning."

Felton darted away, but so swiftly did the creature sail through the air, steering its enormous body with lateral movements of its tail, that it was swooping in broad circles like a plunging cloud above them before he could get out of sight around the crag. To his horror, it hovered directly over him, having evidently caught sight of him. He crouched against a large bowlder, freezing, after the manner of some small animals, hoping to be overlooked or taken for a stone; but it was not to be so fooled, and dropped upon the ground across his way of escape, and began a systematic hunt among the bowlders for the moving object it had seen.

Felton watched it with bated breath, a cold sweat beading his face as it gradually neared him, snuffling greedily, licking its skinny, fleshless mouth with driveling eagerness. There was something peculiarly revolting in the prospect of making a tidbit for such a creature, puffing its fetid breath in snorts and grunts. The little drama was out of range of the Professor's vision, but he surmised it, and shouted continuous, confused commands for Felton to "remain perfectly quiet—to rush back to his refuge—to creep under a tilted bowlder—but on no account to shoot, as he was determined to preserve the creature—to have a perfect specimen!"

"As if this little popgun could make any impression upon that immense carcass!" Felton jeered mentally.

He held the gun in readiness, having drawn it mechanically, and when the monster towered above his bowlder, and thrust its snuffling snout almost in his face, he emptied the gun rapidly, dropped flat, and under cover of the smoke wriggled away, snakelike, among the rocks, and squeezed into a cleft in the ledge. Here he lay trembling from the tension, but safe for the moment, realizing that a terrifying commotion had followed the shots, that the beast had seemed to be tearing up the earth and shaking its foundations with the furious roaring, that a hail of sand and stones had filled the air, and that the Professor's angry yells had punctured it all, like rifle shots in a cannonade. The pandemonium gradually quieted, and the beast, as if having enough of its quest for game, complainingly sought the Professor, who soothed it with anxious, consolatory remarks, unflattering in the extreme to Felton.

"It is as if I had cheated the Thing in escaping from its hideous jaws," Felton thought, grimly amused, as he carefully crawled from the vicinity.

When he was well on his way, he consulted his watch, surprised to find it was yet early afternoon, things had happened fast since morning, and he felt as if he had lived a year in those few, strenuous hours.

In the rush he had forgotten to keep even a biscuit for himself, and had had nothing all day. Toward night he shot a rabbit and roasted it, making a poor meal of it without bread or salt. Then he curled himself up, blanketless, in the shelter of a deep crevice, and passed an uncomfortable but undisturbed night.

CHAPTER IV.

A BRAZEN INTRUDER.

Felton expected to be probed with questions by the curious villagers, and exerted his ingenuity in composing plausible lies; but he found that a breeze of intense excitement was agitating the place over the discovery of a gold field, reputed to be immensely rich; and in the bustle of gathering and departing gold-hunters, his quiet advent was unnoticed. Nothing could have pleased Felton better; his way was perfectly clear, with only Edith's natural curiosity and anxiety to allay.

After refreshing himself, he was hastening to perform this pleasant task, when to his astonishment and vexation, he was confronted with the smirking face of Ralph Billford, one time favorite of Professor Swainfurth, and aspirant to the position of son-in-law to that eccentric individual; who had persistently thrust his admiration and attentions upon Edith, impervious to her cold rejection of such favors.

"Well met," Billford said, gayly. "An acquaintance is a Godsend in this beastly hole."

"If you don't like it, what are you here for?" Felton replied, shortly.

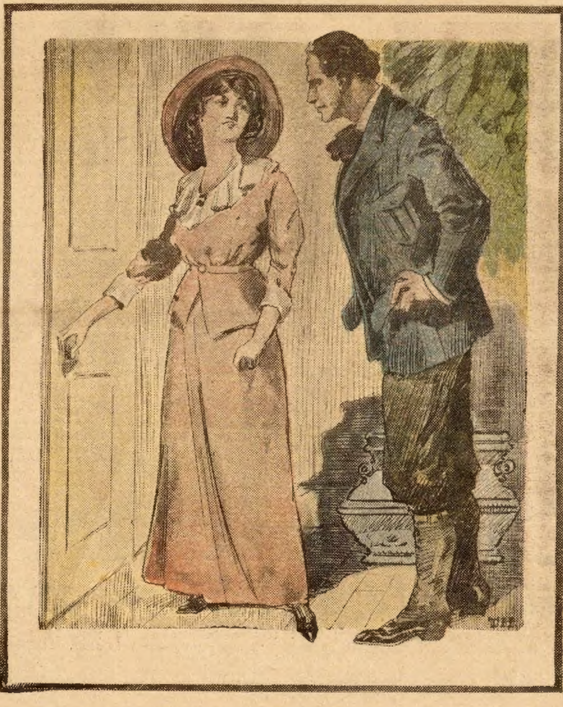
"What are you?" Billford retorted, knowingly.

"That's my affair. Excuse me," Felton passed on.

He had never professed even the slightest friendship for Billford, and did not propose to be hampered now in his movements, or bothered with impertinent questions. He could guess that the fellow had followed the Professor and Edith, and he wondered indignantly if she had been annoyed by him, in her lonely position. If so, there would be a reckoning later. He walked on rapidly, but Billford stuck to his elbow.

"Look here!" Felton stopped and spoke bluntly. "I have business to attend to; you'll have to amuse yourself."

"I'm not here for amusement exactly, though I'll find it, Miss Swainfurth being



"He hasn't had the chance," she laughed.

here. Anyway, your business is mine just now," Billford returned jauntily.

"Whatever you are here for, you shall not meddle in my affairs. Understand that!" Felton declared hotly. "So take yourself off."

"You are impolite, but I am not going to be offended, nor shaken either. Whither thou goest, I go," Billford grinned.

Felton ignored him, and hurried on, the other cheek by jowl with him. When they arrived at the private house where the Professor had taken lodging, Felton darted ahead, was admitted, and the door bolted behind him, Edith having observed their approach.

"Has that chump bothered you?" was Felton's greeting.

"He hasn't had the chance. I haven't been 'at home,' since his first call yesterday," Edith laughed.

"I suppose he has merely followed you," Felton said, tentatively.

"He wanted me to believe his devotion and his regret at the disagreemnt with father had brought him. But I think him incapable of either feeling, and feel sure he is here to annoy us in some way."

"Concerning your father's object? That may be. I think myself that he's butting in to get even with the Professor. He can make a whole lot of bother for us, if he keeps at it, but I'll try to outwit him."

"He's a small-minded, vindictive man," Edith commented. "But enough of him. You have found father, of course; your manner shows that. Is he all right, and where is he?"

"He is all right, and so deeply interested that a steam tug could not pull him away except in pieces. But I'll tell you frankly, Edith, I am bound by an oath not to tell anything to any one, not even you, until he gives the word. This explains that I am to have access to his chest, of which I have the key," he showed her the card on the face of which the Professor had written a line to that effect.

Edith read it, then turned the card, but Felton covered the list, taking hand and card in his. "I am not to let you see that, though I cannot imagine why, but I must obey orders," he said drawing her close, with the intimation that he deserved something for his services to her father.

Blushing, Edith lifted her sweet lips, then pulled up a chair and made him sit down.

"You look worn out, but I suppose you are to go back at once to father."

"As soon as possible," he replied. "And I foresee a difficulty in avoiding Billford, if he sticks to his threat. On no account must he accompany me. I'll have to work it somehow, but he has the cheek of a brass factory, and can't be insulted." He raised the corner of the curtain and peered out. "There he is, lounging on the corner, smoking, waiting for me. I can't start back immediately, as I intended, else he'll tag me. I'll get ready and slip off after dark. If you'll show me the Professor's belongings, I'll make up my pack."

"I wish——" she began wistfully, when they stood by the iron-bound box.

"Yes, so do I," Felton interrupted heartily; "but I must not. Only be sure that your father is all right—'good for another week, if it is necessary,' those are his very words. You are not to be anxious and worry if we should be some days in getting around."

"It is very strange," she said. "He knows he can trust me, or should know it. It can't be possible! Oh, I must not turn the screws on you—but I imagine——"

"Anything you please," he broke in, feeling that her imagination could never equal the reality.

She turned pale, crying: "You look as if——" Then with a sudden shame, "I am as bad as Billford—and almost—I would tag you myself."

"Do not think of such a thing!" he exclaimed, horrified by the thought of her in the region of the monstrous thing.

"Oh, I'll curb my curiosity and hold myself here, unless you are both gone beyond all reason. Now I must not hinder you longer." She slipped away, leaving Felton to his task.

He followed Swainfurth's directions exactly, wondering somewhat as to the nature and use of the strange appliances, packed precisely, in the box, but meddled with none but those specified in the list.

After his packet was prepared, he lingered a little for a tender good-by, then strolled about the village, listening to the glowing gold stories until he was almost tempted to regret his inability to try his luck; and decided that he would, perhaps, when Professor Swainfurth no longer needed his help. Everywhere Billford was at his heels, with an amused smile that was exceedingly aggravating; but Felton held himself in, and took no notice of him, not even when, as neighbors at the supper table, they passed dishes to each other.

Immediately after supper, Felton went to his room, locked the door, and lay down for a few hours' sleep. He had planned to steal out late, secure his pack, which Edith was to place in a convenient spot, and be well away on the desert that intervened between the village and the mountains before the moon arose. Which plan he carried out easily, having, by means of a coin, made a secret and unobstructed exit from the hotel, by the back way, thus avoiding Billford's watchful eyes.

He could not decide as to the meaning of Billford's presence. He could hardly hope to placate Professor Swainfurth, and reinstate himself in the position he had lost. Did he merely wish to annoy the Professor and Edith, having given up all hope of winning the girl? It hardly seemed likely that he would go to so much trouble and expense for so small a revenge. Then, did he suspect there was truth in the reports, and intend to follow and spy upon Professor Swainfurth, steal such knowledge from him as possible, and pass it over to the Professor's rivals in the scientific business, for a good consideration, of course? This last seemed the more probable; it fitted Billford's nature, and as Felton contemplated the meanness of the pilfering and spying, he felt himself loyally identified with Swainfurth, and what had been undertaken for Edith's sake became a fight for fair play, as well. He rushed on, determined to make all haste to acquaint the Professor with the situation, and together they would devise a scheme to prevent the sneak from finding out anything about the monster until Swainfurth's plans concerning it were completed.

Chancing to look back at the moon beginning to show above the distant mountains, he discovered a spark glowing in the darkness, not far in his rear, and realized instantly that in spite of his caution he was trailed by Billford. The wind was in his face, blowing from the lake, or he would have smelled the cigar Billford was smoking, evidently caring little for concealment.

Felton's first thought was to get rid of the hound, dodge him in the intricacies of the rocky foothills, and he broke into a trot. As if understanding the movement, Billford made a spurt and overtook him as he ran down into a gully.

"I used to be about your match as a sprinter, you remember, Felton," he remarked, alluding to their rivalry at college athletics. "I told you I wouldn't be shaken."

"You sneak!" Felton exploded.

"Why, you and the old duffer must have run up against something worth while," Billford insinuated, with a guffaw. "Where is the old boy, anyhow?"

Felton marched on in silence. It was useless to bandy word with Billford, but as to allowing him to push himself into this affair and frustrate Swainfurth's plans—well, something pretty serious would happen first! He suddenly struck off up a canyon at right angles to the true direction. One of them was going to be lost, and he would not be the one.

He felt confident he could find his way back to the lake once he had got rid of the human burr which had attached itself to him. Deeper and deeper he plunged into the mountains, the moonlight on the heights making the darkness of the canyons seem more intense and bewildering, in the turnings and angles. Billford swore softly as he stumbled and bumped against rocks and bowlders, or tore through tangled briers and thickets, decorating them with samples from his garments, and receiving their compliments in scratches on hands and face. Hearing him, Felton smiled and felt somewhat compensated, also encouraged. Billford's dissipated life had undoubtedly sapped his endurance; it would, perhaps, be possible to tire him out and leave him to his fate. It would be a tough experience, even if he escaped with his life, but he had brought it upon himself; Felton acknowledged no responsibility concerning him. After a long and stiff bit of climbing, as they stopped a moment on the summit to breathe, a necessity Felton himself could not avoid, Billford offered his first remonstrance.

"What's the use hurrying as if the devil was after you, Felton?" he panted.

"If you don't like my pace, stop where you are," Felton advised.

"Oh, I understand your game, bubby," Billford chuckled. "And I repeat, I am not to be shook. You'd better slow down and save yourself, for you'll make nothing by it."

For answer Felton dashed away, with increased speed. He was not afraid of Billford's using the revolver that bulged his pocket, while they were in an unknown wilderness. He had not an idea himself as to where they were; but having studied the general trend of the canyons on his journeys, he was sure that he could follow down to the lake. For several hours he led on, climbing up, and dashing down; then, when toward the top of a large mountain, Felton suddenly became aware that Billford contemplated a foul attack upon him. From the tail of his eye, in turning, he saw that Billford carried his revolver butt end first, and was making, furtively, the swing of the arm that would give force to the blow, waiting only until their respective positions should be favorable.

He pulled his own gun and swerved, with a swift leap, behind a great rock, and as Billford lunged after him, got in the first blow. Billford dropped stunned, and his revolver bounded down the side of the canyon. When he revived, he was tied hand and foot with the small but strong rope, or cord, which was one of the articles on the Professor's list. There was a cheerful little fire, and Felton sat before it eating a lunch.

"Head ache?" Felton asked, smiling. "It was tough, but you had the same in for me, so there's nothing to kick about."

"Who's kicking?" Billford growled. "Does this end act one?" There was considerable anxiety in the question.

"Guessed it right the first time," Felton assented cordially. "You've been too previous about the footlights, and you're going to retire till the audience calls for you. In other words, you're going to camp up here, snug and cozy, by your lonely for a spell."

"But say, you wouldn't really go off and leave me in this fix?" Billford cried, a note of horror in his tone.

"I certainly would, and shall," Felton replied. "In fact, I'm delighted to dispose of your freshness so. Have a snack?" He leaned over and offered to feed his captive. Billford sulkily declined to eat, and Felton settled himself comfortably and was soon snoring.

This strange story leads to very extraordinary situations and dramatic episodes. The reader will find it eminently worth reading to the end. Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of it. The surest way to get the Ledger is to subscribe for it and have it come to your home regularly. Today is a good time to attend to this.

Alice Clement, Detective

A GAME OF HEARTS

By COURTNEY R. COOPER

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(Editor's Note—On the payroll of the municipal detective department of the city of Chicago appears the name of Alice Clement, sleuth. To the trackers of men who make their headquarters at the bureau at 179 North La Salle street, she is known as "Alice of the Smile." Fearless, resourceful, dangerous in a hundred simple little disguises which mask her, yet do not hinder her, she has found the evidence which has sent many a man and many a woman to the penitentiary. There is hardly a dangerous dive of the great city which she, in her twelve years of detective life, has not visited. More than once has her life been in danger, many times has she been compelled to use the dirk or the revolver that she carries for protection. And yet, through it all, she has remained pretty, vivacious, full of life and the love of living—and always deserving of her name, "Alice of the Smile." Too, she has always remained reticent, non-communicative about her adventures, until Mr. Cooper persuaded her to tell her adventures for the first time.)

"THE divorce grist is still grinding on," I remarked as my glance traveled over the shoulder of the man ahead of me and saw by the paper he held that eighty separations had been achieved in one day of court. Miss Clement and myself were on a Ravinia train, bound for the concert, and were hurrying through Evanston. "It certainly gets me how any one stays married nowadays," I continued. "But then, if people can't get along together, it's the best thing for them to get along away from each other."

"Yes," Miss Clement assented rather seriously. "But the trouble is that most persons don't have a chance to get along. Somebody is always mixing in, getting one or the other so wrought up about nothing that they finally get to thinking that there isn't any possibility of happiness. I ought to know," she added, and then there came that glint into her eyes which always foreshadows one of her experiences. "I've patched up more than one divorce case when it looked helpless. And I've found this out: That half the time it isn't the fault of the man or the woman. They'd get along all right if other people would leave them alone. It isn't always the fault of the mother-in-law, although, goodness knows, no matter how kind they may try to be, they can cause more trouble than a regiment of infantry. But there's always somebody or a bunch of somebodies to cause trouble when it isn't any of their business."

The train stopped for a minute, then hurried on again. And with its start began Miss Clement's story.

"I've handled many a divorce case in my detective existence," she said, and then added with a little laugh, "and many times have I played some little trick that brought a man and a woman together again. It's queer, too, but just when you mention it, I was thinking of another time when I traveled on a train, with Cupid in my suitcase, and dissension bumping along behind on the ties, where the roadway was hardest. Of course, it wasn't what I had been paid to do—but then when everything was over, I felt a lot better than if I had followed orders, and I guess two other persons did, too.

"I wouldn't tell their real names, even to you, and just for the sake of reference we'll call them Mr. and Mrs. Douglas. The beginning was a coincidence.

"One morning I received a note, asking me to call at the office of Mr. Douglas. I went there, to find a rather young man, whose face seemed tired and worried. His office was not a big one or a spacious one. I could see that whatever he had was gained through mighty hard work. And he had a story to tell.

"'Miss Clement,' he began, 'I want you to get evidence for me in regard to a divorce case. Mrs. Douglas and I were married about two years ago. She's a pretty little girl—pretty enough to be dangerous—and I am acting on the advice of my friends in coming to a detective—in coming to you, in fact.'

"I made no answer to that. If I had it would have been to say something about those lovable friends, for I had seen their work before. I allowed him to go on.

"'For the first year we got along fairly well on what we had, and then Mrs. Douglas took a notion she wanted to earn a little home of her own. I was willing to do anything that could be done and I started to work with all my might. But getting ahead is a hard business. We had enough to make the first payment, but after that, things were harder. And I've been working my head off night and day to try to get ahead. It isn't that which hurts, Miss Clement. But it seems the harder I work the less Mrs. Douglas thinks of me. She acts queerly toward me, as though she doesn't love me any more. I have not been having very good luck with my business, but I have been doing my best, and my friends have seen that, and they have pointed out to me the truth of everything. Mrs. Douglas never has cared for me, from I what I can understand. She married me thinking there were great possibilities in me, and then when things went hard she just determined that she would get as much out of me as she could, and then throw me over. Everything is hers, you see. The house is in her name and all that, and she's just trying to squeeze me for every cent she can. And I'm not going to let her. That's all.'

"I made no remarks on the situation. Instead, I promised that I would let him know in a day or two whether or not I could find a way to prove his assertions. Then I went back to the office.

"And there on the desk was a dainty little envelope, addressed in a feminine hand. I opened it and with my eyes staring read:

"'Dear Miss Clement: I have been referred to you as some one who can assist me in obtaining evidence upon which to base a divorce suit against my husband. Will you kindly call at your convenience. (MRS.) JEANETTE DOUGLAS.'

"So, just as I thought, there were two sides to the question. I knew that it was not professional in the strict sense of the word to serve two clients in the same case, but there was something forming in my brain that would take away all the possibility of an infraction of ethics. I would hear what she had to say, anyway. And I went out to the house.

"A pretty little woman met me; she was little more than a girl and had she not told me her name when she came to the door I would hardly have believed she was more than 17 years old. There was worry on her face, too, as she led me within, and I could see that she had been crying.

"'You asked me to come to see you in regard to a divorce,' I began.

"'Yes,' she answered, slowly, and I could see that her heart was sore. 'I have determined to get a divorce from Brent. We were married two years ago. A year ago we decided to get this little house, and then, under the pretext of making more money to put into it, he began staying away from home. At first I believed he was working, but the advance in the money he has been making does not show it. At least, mamma, who has lived with us ever since we were married, just came to me and told me the truth. It just hurt her heart so to see how I was being treated that she had to do it. She showed me how Brent must be making a lot more money than he had been turning in, and certainly if he has—what on earth has he been doing with it?'

"'You suspect another woman, then?' I asked.

"'I certainly do,' she answered with a snap, 'and so does mamma.'

"I could have known that last without her telling me. I was beginning to see through a few things. Mamma on one side, friends on the other. Both mixing their opinions in where they had no right. The poor little couple hadn't even had a chance to become good comrades. And, as I left the house, I resolved that for once in my life I was going to serve two clients in the same case, and for their benefit.

The next afternoon I went to Mr. Douglas' office. I carried with me a ticket on one of the fastest trains out of Chicago, and a stateroom reservation. I handed them both to him.

"'I am sorry that I cannot give you any information as to what the purpose of this is—except to tell you it will show you the standing of your wife toward you. You are to take this train tomorrow afternoon and stay in the smoking compartment until after we pass Joliet. Then you are to go to your stateroom and remain there. Will you take my orders?'

"'Certainly," he answered, 'but I can't understand——'

"'I am doing the detective work in this case,' I answered him. 'You desired some evidence. I am going to get it if you will let me have my way. If not—I give up the case very cheerfully.'

"He held up a restraining hand.

"'I'll obey your orders,' he answered with a smile.

"'Very well,' I said as I left the office. 'Say nothing of this to your wife, and do not even tell her that you are going out of town. You will hear from me at St. Louis or sooner. Good day.'

"I left him then and hurried for a car which would take me to the home of Mrs. Douglas. Her mother met me at the door.

"'Is it anything regarding the case?' she asked, and I thought I detected a bit of eagerness in her tone. Poor soul, she believed she was doing right in separating a husband and wife. I don't believe there was ever a mother who didn't believe that she was working for the best. But she just didn't realize that she was a bit selfish in her love for her daughter, and that the ties of marriage had given some one else another claim also.

"'Yes,' I answered her, 'it is about the case. I want to see Mrs. Douglas personally.'

"Ten minutes later I was alone with the little girl. I took from my pocket a railroad ticket and a stateroom reservation.

"'Here,' I said, 'I have found the way to get some evidence as regards your husband. The moment he leaves the house tomorrow morning, hurry for a train and go to Joliet. Then, in the afternoon, take the flyer and go right to your stateroom. I want no one on the train to see you, if possible. Do you understand?'

"'No,' she answered, frankly.

"'You will later,' I told her, 'I will see that you have more information by the time you reach St. Louis. Now, I believe you will do as you say.'

"'I will,' she coincided, and I left her to go to my apartment, snuggle my little kiddie up against my breast, and spend more than one hour in planning ahead and smiling to myself.

"'What's the matter, mamma?' Baby asked me. 'What do you see that's funny?'

"'A lot of things, Honey,' I murmured. 'just a whole lot of things.'

"The next afternoon at five o'clock, I boarded the train for St. Louis, and as I walked past the smoking compartment of the Pullman, I took a peek within. Then I smiled. A man was within, smoking and apparently nervous. At least a part of my scheme had worked. One by one the people entered, until every berth was full. I chanced to take a peek within the stateroom—just an accidental opening of the door, you know—and laughed to myself as I saw that the porter had done the work I had bribed him to do. There was a grin on his black face when I passed him in the passageway, and he bowed his head.

"'Ah's done got everything arranged,' he said.

"'Shh-h-h!' I warned him, hastily. We were near the smoking compartment.

"For an hour nothing happened. My seat was near the smoker end of the car and my eyes were continually on the passageway, for I was fearful that he would tire of his job of staying within the compartment. But he obeyed my orders.

"'Joliet!' called the porter and I felt something creepy begin to spring up within me. Now was to be the beginning of the working out of my plan. I heard a feminine voice outside and then the voice of the porter.

"'Ah'll done bring de grip in a minute; yo' stateroom's right straight down de aisle.'

"I turned my head to the window so that she would not notice me. Then, when she had passed, I hurriedly turned and watched. I saw her open the door of the stateroom, start back down the aisle and then jump back again. She had caught sight of her husband issuing from the passageway. He had not seen her.

"He came straight on down the aisle, neither looking to the right nor to the left and headed for the stateroom door. I didn't tell you that I had gotten the tickets for the same stateroom, did I?" Miss Clement asked with that noncomparable, mischievous little smile of hers. "Well, I did. That was a part of my little game, and let me tell you, as I watched Mr. Douglas going down the aisle toward the door, my heart was thumping mighty hard, and I was wondering what he would say when he got in there, found his wife and everything else I had arranged for him. The temptation was strong within me to follow him, and I did. It was not a second after he had opened the door and closed it behind him that I was standing by the little window in the passageway, where, by leaning close, I could hear what went on within. The curtain shielded me from the rest of the car. I knew I had no one to fear except the porter, and I had paid him enough money and told him enough of the situation to make him my ally.

"For a second there was a deep silence from within the room. I knew just what was happening. They were standing there, staring at each other, looking at the decorations on the walls, at the signs I had arranged there, wondering what it all meant and what on earth I had been up to. At least, in my guilty little way, I felt that they were suspecting me. I was hoping though, for the sake of the scheme that I had fostered, that they were not. At last came a voice.

"Jeannette.'

"'Well?' answered the voice of the woman. 'I don't see what right you have in here.'

"'I might say the same thing in regard to you. But I assure you I have no desire to intrude. I shall go into the smoker until we reach the next town and then get off the train.'

"'Very well,' answered Mrs. Douglas, in a matter-of-fact way. Then came the voice of the husband. I could feel pique in it. He felt that in some way he had blundered, and that the best way to do would be to stir up some kind of a quarrel that he might leave the train. And Mrs. Douglas, in the light of the fact that she was there to find evidence against her husband, felt the same way. Yet neither of them knew exactly what to do. If the husband left the train, Mrs. Douglas was sure that the evidence she sought was lost. On his side, Mr. Douglas believed in some vague way that I had known Mrs. Douglas was to be on the train and that I had arranged some kind of a trap for her, which he had bungled. And so he hesitated by the door.

"'Might I ask,' he demanded, 'what you are doing in a stateroom with white ribbons hung all around, with rice and old shoes on the floor, and with signs proclaiming the fact that some one has just been married?'

"'You said you had a ticket for this stateroom and so I can ask you the same question,' came the voice of the wife. 'Perhaps you've turned bigamist.'

"I didn't like the sting in those words, and a fear began to creep up within me. I was wondering whether or not my little plan was going to fail. There was silence a moment and then:

"'It is true I did have a ticket for this stateroom, but I assure you I know nothing of the newly-wed decorations. It may be there has been some mistake. If you'll allow me, I'll find out for you, and see that you are put in your proper stateroom before I leave the train.'

"'That is very kind of you,' she said, somewhat coldly. I heard him turn the key of the door and open it. Then I pulled a string that I had paid more good money to the porter to conceal. An outpouring of rice fell upon the shoulders of Brent Douglas as he walked from the stateroom door. His wife was behind and she got it, too. For a moment, they stared in consternation, then anger flared in the faces of both of them as they looked at the laughing passengers. Mr. Douglas reached to a window and pushed the button for a porter viciously.

"'What do you mean by giving us this stateroom?" he demanded.

"'Cause hit's yours, that's why,' the negro answered, with a grin.

"'Mine—ours?' They both spoke at once. 'Why, we've been married for two years.'

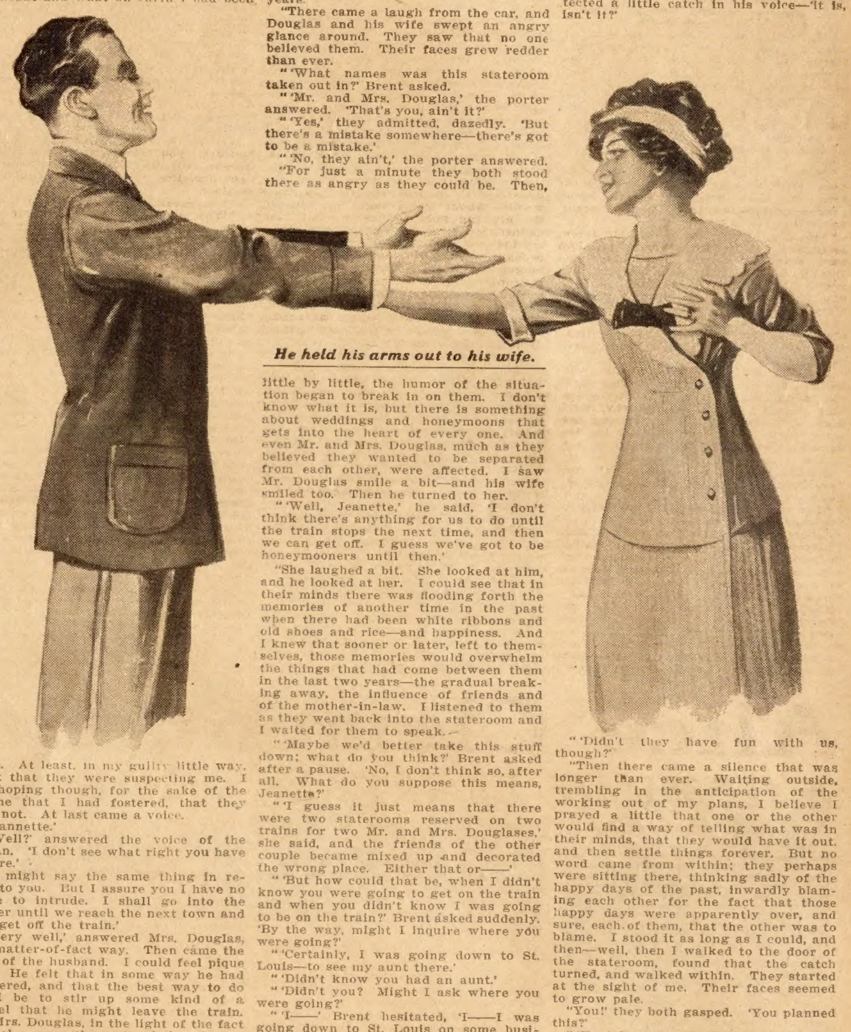
"There came a laugh from the car, and Douglas and his wife swept an angry glance around. They saw that no one believed them. Their faces grew redder than ever.

"'What names was this stateroom taken out in?' Brent asked.

"'Mr. and Mrs. Douglas,' the porter answered. 'That's you, ain't it?'

"'Yes,' they admitted, dazedly. 'But there's a mistake somewhere—there's got to be a mistake.'

"'No, they ain't,' the porter answered.



He held his arms out to his wife.

"For just a minute they both stood there as angry as they could be. Then, little by little, the humor of the situation began to break in on them. I don't know what it is, but there is something about weddings and honeymoons that gets into the heart of every one. And even Mr. and Mrs. Douglas, much as they believed they wanted to be separated from each other, were affected. I saw Mr. Douglas smile a bit—and his wife smiled too. Then he turned to her.

"'Well, Jeanette,' he said, 'I don't think there's anything for us to do until the train stops the next time, and then we can get off. I guess we've got to be honeymooners until then.'

"She laughed a bit. She looked at him, and he looked at her. I could see that in their minds there was flooding forth the memories of another time in the past when there had been white ribbons and old shoes and rice—and happiness. And I knew that sooner or later, left to themselves, those memories would overwhelm the things that had come between them in the last two years—the gradual breaking away, the influence of friends and of the mother-in-law. I listened to them as they went back into the stateroom and I waited for them to speak.

"'Maybe we'd better take this stuff down; what do you think?' Brent asked after a pause. 'No, I don't think so, after all. What do you suppose this means, Jeanette?'

"'I guess it just means that there were two staterooms reserved on two trains for two Mr. and Mrs. Douglases,' she said, and the friends of the other couple became mixed up and decorated the wrong place. Either that or——'

"'But how could that be, when I didn't know you were going to get on the train and when you didn't know I was going to be on the train?' Brent asked suddenly. 'By the way, might I inquire where you were going?'

"'Certainly, I was going down to St. Louis—to see my aunt there.'

"'Didn't know you had an aunt.'

"'Didn't you? Might I ask where you were going?'

"'I——' Brent hesitated, 'I——I was going down to St. Louis on some business.'

"'Oh,' said Jeanette, 'I didn't know you had any business.'

"Then there was a long, long silence, in which I knew that each was studying the other, that each was wondering what other one was up to. I worried then, for that was the crucial moment. If suspicion was stronger than memories, then my plan had failed. But if the environment of the stateroom, the fact that everybody in the car took them to be a young married couple, if all these things could work harder than the new things which had been born in the minds—and which I had forgotten to foresee at all—then my plan would work. And minute after minute I waited there, while from within there came only silence.

"'Brent, tell me,' came at last in the voice of the wife, 'were you really going to St. Louis on business—or was it something else?'

"He waited a moment before he replied.

"'No, I wasn't,' he said. 'I was going down there for something I cannot tell you about, but something I want you to know was not dishonorable nor unfaithful. Somehow or other, Jeanette, since I've been sitting here looking at you, and thinking—well, thinking about another time when you and I were like this—well, I've made up my mind to try something again and see if ——oh, I can't tell you what it is, but——'

"'Do you mean——' she began, and stopped. I could imagine the look on her face.

"'I cannot tell you what I mean,' he answered. 'Only I have had my reasons for believing it a long time. And now—'

"'Oh,' she said, half to herself. Then came that which I was waiting for. She attempted to change the subject. She believed that she had almost trodden on dangerous ground, that he had almost confessed to her that he really did care for another woman, and it hurt. 'That ribbon is pretty, isn't it?' she asked. 'Something like the one that Mary tied on our suitcase the night we were married'

"'Yes,' he answered—I thought I detected a little catch in his voice—'it is, isn't it?'

"'Didn't they have fun with us, though?'

"Then there came a silence that was longer than ever. Waiting outside, trembling in the anticipation of the working out of my plans, I believe I prayed a little that one or the other would find a way of telling what was in their minds, that they would have it out, and then settle things forever. But no word came from within; they perhaps were sitting there, thinking sadly of the happy days of the past, inwardly blaming each other for the fact that those happy days were apparently over, and sure, each of them, that the other was to blame. I stood it as long as I could, and then—well, then I walked to the door of the stateroom, found that the catch turned, and walked within. They started at the sight of me. Their faces seemed to grow pale.

"You!' they both gasped. 'You planned this?'

"'Yes,' I answered, 'I planned it. Mr. Douglas, I was hired by your wife to get divorce evidence on you. Mrs. Douglas, I was hired by your husband to get the same thing on you. Don't answer me. I have a few things to say that I want to get off my mind. I know that right now you are thinking that I tricked both of you some way. I did. I tricked you into a situation where you could see yourself as you were before you let outsiders come between you. You've both been foolish. You have allowed those who have not one-millionth the interest in you that you should have in yourselves to make you believe a lot of things that are not true, that have never been true and will never be true. As you are now, you are turning back two years to when you were first married. Why not wipe out the past, start right where you started once, and make life over again? Mrs. Douglas, you are foolish for listening to the advice of your mother. There is nothing wrong with your husband, except that he is working his life out for you. Mr. Douglas, you are an idiot for listening to your so-called friends. Should what you planned have come to pass, they would have been the first to con-

(Continued on page sixteen.)

In Days of Stress

Or, War in the Shenandoah Valley

By Emma Howard Wight

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CHAPTER IX.

DELILAH.

CHRISTINE, seated at her bedroom window, also watched Colonel Warwick as he returned to the encampment.

"I suppose he has been waiting for me to return," she told herself. "I understood him to say that he had to give a certain order at nine o'clock. I must have been mistaken, for I heard the clock strike nine some little time ago."

The flashing of a red light on Massanutten attracted her attention, and her thoughts turned to Carlisle Allan. He was up there on the mountain in temporary command of the Signal Corps. She sat very still, thinking. Her eyes narrowed, the voluptuous red fullness of her mouth tightened and grew tense. Suddenly she started to her feet.

"It's worth trying," she cried.

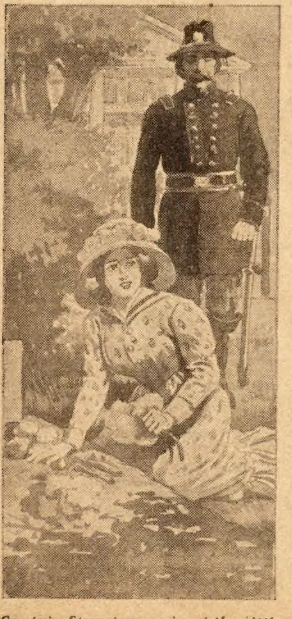
She opened her wardrobe and took down a long dark cloak. With the cloak enveloping her she left the house and went out to the stables. She saddled one of the horses, led it out, mounted, and rode away. She took the road leading to the mountain. The road up the mountainside was perfectly well known to her. She and Marguerite, both expert horsewomen, had often ridden to the top of old Massanutten.

A little distance from the top, Christine dismounted and tied her horse to a tree. She then continued her way on foot, moving slowly and cautiously. Soon she came in sight of the white tents of the Signal Corps. She paused, her heart beginning to beat more rapidly. Lieutenant Allan came out of one of the tents, passed the soldier on guard, and moved toward her. A sense of triumph filled her. She had not expected to find it so easy to obtain speech with Lieutenant Allan without making known her visit to the other Confederates on Massanutten, but Fate seemed to have played into her hands. She drew back in the shadow of a tree and waited.

Lieutenant Allan stopped a moment to light his clay pipe, then came on down the road. Christine waited until he was out of sight and earshot of the guard, then stepped out and faced him, allowing the cloak she wore to slip to the ground. He stopped abruptly, gazing at her amazedly.

"Christine!" he exclaimed, removing the pipe from between his lips. "Are you real?" he went on, dazedly. "Or a vision born of my thoughts of you?"

She moved nearer to him, slipping her slim fingers into his. "A rather substantial vision, am I not?" she queried, softly.



Captain Stuart came in at the little gate.

His fingers closed passionately about hers, his eyes devoured her face almost uncannily lovely in the moonlight, with its dead-white skin, black brows, and red, tropic mouth.

"I was thinking of you when you so suddenly appeared," he declared. "It maddened me to know you were so near."

"You were at Linden," she said.

"Yes, and came very near being captured by the Yankees. You heard about it?"

"Yes." She had no intention of telling him of Podge's death. That might interfere with her plans. Grief for the faithful darky might prove stronger even than her power. In the past she had allured him for her amusement but now she had a more vital purpose.

"You are wondering what has brought me here?" she queried.

"Yes," he replied. He glanced about him. "You did not walk, of course?"

"No. My horse is lower down the mountain. I wanted to see you alone and without the knowledge of any one. I did not know how I would manage it. I was trying to think of a way when I saw you come out of a tent and down the road." She gave him a soft glance and added, in a half-whisper, "I was glad." She moved nearer to him. "Carlisle, do you love me very much?" she asked.

"You know that I do," he replied.

"I have come here tonight to put your love to a test," she declared, laying her hand on his arm. She paused a moment. "You have charge of the signaling here on Massanutten?"

"Yes."

"Tell me what it would mean if a misleading signal were given?" she asked.

He gave her a surprised look as he replied: "Probably disaster and defeat to the Confederates in the Valley."

Her breath came quickly, He was watching her intently.

"That is what I want you to do—give a misleading signal," she whispered.

He recoiled from her with a shocked exclamation.

"You want me to commit an act of the blackest treachery?" he exclaimed, incredulously.

"It would not be the first time a man had been guilty of treachery for love's sake," she suggested, softly.

"My God! Have you come here to tempt me?" he cried, passionately. "You know that I love you, that I want you as man never loved and wanted woman before. Are you going to use that knowledge to play the part of a Delilah?"

Her only reply was to move closer to him, until the red gold of her hair swept his shoulder, and lift her face to his. With a murmured exclamation of uncontrollable passion, he bent and pressed his lips to hers. She yielded herself to his arms as they closed about her. He held her close, raining kisses upon her hair, her lips, her throat. She was a superb actress, and she feigned a responsiveness she did not feel.

"What is to be my reward, Christine, if I do this thing?" he asked, at length, in a hoarse whisper.

"Do as I wish, and I can refuse you nothing," she replied.

"You will marry me?"

She hesitated just a second. "Yes," she replied. "When will you do it?" she asked.

"At midnight. The signal to be given then is the waving three times of a red light. It means——" He stopped suddenly. "Never mind that," he went on. She bit her lips and frowned, but controlled herself almost immediately.

"You will not use that signal?" she queried.

"No, a blue light will be used instead."

She drew a tense breath. Then her lips again met his, and she withdrew herself from his arms.

"I must go," she said.

Mechanically he lifted her cloak from the ground and folded it about her. She swayed toward him, and again he passionately embraced her. She slipped from his arms and glided away.

He stood for some time motionless where she had left him. He felt like a man who was dreaming. He wanted to awaken. He drew a great sigh and passed his hand over his brow. His pipe lay on the ground at his feet; he stooped and picked it up. His brain began to clear, his leaping pulses throbbed more quietly, his blood cooled. He faced the fact that he had sold his honor, bartered it for a woman's kisses. Through his brain flashed the first man's excuse, "The woman tempted me." He turned and walked slowly back up the mountain.

The guard saluted as he passed. He shrank from the man guiltily. He was already a traitor at heart. He crept into his tent like some guilty thing. He sat down upon his cot, resting his head on his hand. He wanted to think dispassionately over what he had promised to do. He was going to be guilty of blackest treachery to win the woman he loved. Well, greater men than he had done the same thing, and found their compensation in the arms of the women they loved. It would prove the same with him.

He looked at his watch. It was just eleven o'clock. He sighed. Another hour before it would be time to give the signal. He longed to have it over. The waiting was terrible. He did not want to think. He arose, walked to the entrance of the tent, and stood looking out. Far below, bathed in silvery light, lay the beautiful Valley of the Shenandoah. Thousands of his fellow soldiers were there. What would his treachery mean to them? Defeat, imprisonment, death. He shuddered. Then he lifted his white, strained face to the sky.

"God help me!" he murmured. "I cannot do it!"

* * * * *

The big clock in the hall at Mountainview began to strike the hour. Christine, sitting at her bedroom window, leaned forward, listening.

"Twelve o'clock!" she exclaimed, and turned again breathlessly toward the mountain.

A light flashed on the mountain, once, twice, three times. The light was red!

CHAPTER X.

THE SILENCE OF WARWICK.

Upon the following morning, between eleven and twelve o'clock, Christine, with a disturbed expression on her face, came into the livingroom where Marguerite and Mammy sat sewing.

"Colonel Warwick is no longer in command of the detachment," she announced, abruptly.

Marguerite glanced up quickly, but she bent her curly head again over her work, to hide the painful flushing of her cheeks.

Christine walked to the window and stood looking out, her face gloomy.

"Robert Stuart, Captain Stuart, he is now, is in command," she added.

Marguerite looked up quickly, with a half-frown. "Robert Stuart!" she exclaimed. "He here in the Valley!"

"Why shouldn't he be here in the Valley," exclaimed Christine, "like any other Union soldier? He is in Sheridan's command. He must have distinguished himself to have reached so high a rank. Dorothy Allan has reason to be proud of him."

"I don't see how she can be," murmured Marguerite. "She clings to him, I reckon, because she loves him."

"And because she is just and fair-minded," declared Christine.

"I wonder if his father will ever forgive him?" said Marguerite, musingly.

Christine did not make any reply; in fact, she hardly heard her, she was absorbed in thought. Everything was going wrong with her.

"Miss Mary Stuart am breakin' her heart 'bout Mist' Robert," Mammy declared. "She comes in de kitchen whar Clarindy am and talks and talks 'bout him, and cries fitten to break her heart, but she don't dare say nuhin' befo' Mist' Charles. He won't let nobody mention Mist' Robert befo' him."

"I hope his father will relent for his mother's sake," said Marguerite. "I used to be very fond of Robert; we were children together, but it's dreadful to think that he is fighting against the South, against my father. I really don't see how he could join the Union army."

She looked up as Christine turned suddenly from the window and moved toward the door. But Christine went out without speaking. She passed along the hall and out upon the porch. She was too restless to remain quiet. She was possessed by a feverish desire to learn something of Colonel Warwick. She lacked the patience, the endurance, the self-control of a more disciplined woman. She felt that she could not endure the uncertainty, the suspense, in regard to the man she loved.

She walked down off the porch and across the lawn toward the Federal encampment. She stopped at the gate and stood leaning upon it. A colored boy was passing along the turnpike. She stopped him, told him to go to the Federal encampment, and say to the officer in command that Miss Willoughby wished to speak to him.

The darky departed on his errand. In a short while Robert Stuart, in the uniform of a Federal officer, crossed the turnpike and came up to the gate, lifting his cap. Christine glanced at him a little curiously. He looked much older, and his face was very grave and thoughtful.

"How do you do, Captain Stuart?" she said, holding out her hand.

"So you are still in the South, Miss Willoughby?" he remarked, conventionally, as they shook hands. Then he added, impulsively, with feeling. "Please tell me something of my parents. Are they well?"

"Your father's condition is about the same," she replied. "Your mother has grown much older during these past four terrible years, Captain Stuart."

He sighed. "Poor mother!" he murmured.

Christine, no longer able to control her impatience to learn something of Colonel Warwick, changed the subject rather abruptly.

"I was surprised to hear of Colonel Warwick's departure," she said. "We saw quite a great deal of him while he was in command here," she explained.

"Colonel Warwick has resigned," Captain Stuart explained.

"Resigned?" Christine exclaimed.

"Yes. He reported at headquarters that he had been negligent in the discharge of his duty."

Christian looked amazed. "Colonel Warwick is the last man to fail in his duty as a soldier, I should imagine," she exclaimed.

"Any one who knows him would certainly suppose so," said Captain Stuart. "Colonel Warwick claims that he failed to have an extra guard placed as he had been instructed to do by General Sheridan. When asked to explain why he did so, he refused to give any explanation."

"How strange!" exclaimed Christine, wonderingly.

"Yes, it does seem strange," acquiesced Captain Stuart. "And it is greatly to be deplored. Colonel Warwick is a brave soldier, and, because of the service he has done the North, this dereliction would be overlooked if he would give some explanation."

"And if he does not?" queried Christine.

"I am afraid his resignation will be accepted, and that will mean the ruin of his career. He will have left the army under a cloud," said Captain Stuart, regretfully.

Christine stood thinking. She remembered that Colonel Warwick was on the porch with Marguerite at nine o'clock when the order to place the extra guard should have been given. Having obtained the information she desired, she did not detain Captain Stuart very much longer. She returned quickly to the house, and went in search of Marguerite.

The girl had put aside her work, and was sitting on the floor at Mammy's feet with her curly head against the old darky's knees. Christine, glancing at her keenly, noted that the sweet face was pale and the blue eyes had a troubled look. Standing looking down upon her, Christine related to Marguerite all that she had learned from Captain Stuart relative to Colonel Warwick. At first Marguerite listened breathlessly, her eyes wide and dilated, her lips pale and tremulous. But by the time Christine had finished, she had grown very calm.

"I must go and tell General Sheridan why Colonel Warwick will give no explanation," she said, quietly, rising to her feet.

"Do you mean that you know why he refuses?" cried Christine.

"Yes, I know why," Marquerite replied, moving toward the door.

"Where are you going?" asked Christine.

Marguerite stopped and looked back at her.

"I am going to the Federal headquarters to see General Sheridan," she replied. "I am going to give him the explanation Colonel Warwick refuses—that it was I who prevented Colonel Warwick placing that guard at the entrance to the pine wood."

"You?" cried Christine, approaching nearer to her. "You?"

"Yes. Father was here, he came through the wood. If the guard had been placed there at nine o'clock he would have been captured. I kept Colonel Warwick until father had time to get away."

Christine leaned toward her, speaking tensely:

"How did you manage to—keep him?"

The girl's pale face flushed.

"He had told me that he loved me."

Christine started and the vivid color forsook her lips.

"Go on," she whispered hoarsely.

"I made him believe that I cared for him. I kept him—that way," Marguerite explained, in a low voice.

There was a moment's dead silence. Mammy, after a glance at Christine's face, arose and moved nearer to her young mistress, as though she feared some harm would come to her. The silence was startlingly broken by a laugh. It came from Christine's pale, working lips, a wild, bitter laugh. Marguerite looked at her in astonishment not unmixed with fear.

"So he has fallen in love with your baby face," she cried. "That is why he came, that is why I found him cold and unresponsive. He was jealous of Carlisle Allen, fearing that you might care for him. Fool! deluded fool that I have been!"

"Christine!" cried Marguerite, imploringly. She started toward her, but Christine repulsed her passionately.

'"Don't come near me! Don't touch me!" she cried. "I hate you!"

With a sob, Marguerite turned to Mammy and hid her face on the old darky's shoulder. Mammy looked indignantly at Christine.

"You oughter be 'shamed ob yo'se'f, Miss Christine, to talk dat away to dis heah chile," she exclaimed. "'Tain't her fault dat Yankee kunnel done falled in lub wid her 'stid ob you. I reckon she don't want nuffin' to do wid no Yankee."

Christine took no notice. She rushed from the room and upstairs to her bedroom, where she cast herself upon the bed in an abandonment of anguish. Marguerite lifted her head and looked at Mammy, a resolute expression on the soft, babyish beauty of her face.

"I must go at once to General Sheridan," she said. "I must exonerate Colonel Warwick as far as lies in my power."

"Don't you do nuffin' ob de kind, honey," protested Mammy. "Dat Yankee kunnel ain't worth yo' shamin' ob you'se'f dat a-way."

A faint smile passed over Marguerite's lips. "Worth it?" she exclaimed. "Oh, yes, a thousand times. He is every inch a man, a soldier, and a gentleman."

Mammy stared in something like consternation. "'Fo' de Lawd! chile, I sho'ly does beliebe you'se in lub wid him yo'se'f!" she cried.

CHAPTER XI.

EXONERATED.

General Sheridan's headquarters in Strasburg were in an old school building. Marguerite, accompanied by Mammy, was shown into a long room on the ground floor, where the Union general sat before a table engaged in looking over certain drawings and plans of the Valley and the position of the enemy. He looked up as Marguerite came forward, followed closely by Mammy, who looked with scant favor at the great Union commander. He glanced curiously and with interest at the girl, but waited for her to speak.

With shame-crimsoned cheeks, but very bravely, she told her story, to which General Sheridan listened attentively. When she had finished, he bowed and touched a bell on the table at his elbow. An orderly entered almost immediately.

"Tell Colonel Warwick I wish to see him," said General Sheridan.

Marguerite flushed painfully as the orderly saluted and withdrew She had not expected to see Colonel Warwick The flush had faded from her cheeks, and she was pale when Colonel Warwick entered. He looked very much astonished upon perceiving Marguerite, but he almost instantly controlled himself, bowed to her, and then turned to General Sheridan.

"You wish to see me, General?"

"Yes." There was an amused twinkle in General Sheridan's eyes. "This young lady, Colonel, has just explained to me why you did not place that extra guard." Colonel Warwick bowed. "I consider you exonerated by the explanation she has given."

Colonel Warwick's handsome face flushed. "I am greatly indebted to Miss Foster," he said.

Marguerite bowed with downcast eyes. The strain was beginning to tell upon her; she felt unnerved. She longed to get away.

"Come 'long, honey, let's go," said Mammy, with a glance at her young mistress' pale cheeks.

"I thank you, General, for your attention," said Marguerite, addressing Sheridan. She hesitated a moment, then added, "and for the manner in which you have received my explanation."

"Permit me to thank you, young lady, for your brave and generous exoneration of Colonel Warwick," General Sheridan replied.

He arose and remained standing until Marguerite and Mammy had passed out of the room; then he turned to Colonel Warwick.

"That's a fine girl, Colonel," he declared. "I admire your taste and wish you success."

Colonel Warwick smiled sadly. "Thank you, General, but I am afraid there's not much hope for me," he replied.

"'Faint heart ne'er won fair lady,'" declared General Sheridan, as he sat down. "Do you wish to resume command of the detachment?" he asked.

Colonel Warwick thought a moment.

"No, General," he replied, at length.

Sheridan nodded. "Very well."

As Colonel Warwick saluted and turned to go out, he called after him, "I have decided to attack Early at Fisher's Hill within the next day or so."

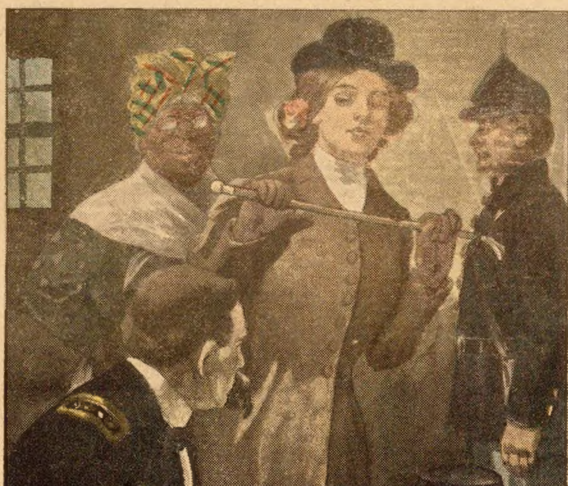
CHAPTER XII.

AFTER FOUR YEARS.

The red glow from the setting sun lay across Podge's new-made grave at the foot of the flower garden. Dorothy came down the garden path with an armful of late roses and white chrysanthemums. She knelt down beside the grave, arranging her flowers upon it with loving care.

Captain Stuart came in at the little gate at the foot of the garden. He had often come that way in the happy past to find Dorothy waiting for him among the roses. Now, as he came forward, he found her kneeling beside a grave. She looked up as he came forward and there was more of sadness than joy in her eyes as she saw him. She placed the last of the flowers upon the grave and arose.

"Robert!" she said, holding out her hand to him.



General Sheridan listened attentively.

He came forward and took her hand. He saw that she shrank slightly, and guessed instinctively that it was because of the blue uniform he wore, in which she saw him clad for the first time. It was that involuntary shrinking that caused him to refrain from taking her in his arms as he so longed to do.

"I came here, Dorothy, where you and I have spent so many happy hours, because I could not help myself," he explained.

"I am glad you came," she replied, simply.

"You are?" he questioned, with a mixture of eagerness and wistfulness.

"Yes, even though you find me beside a —grave."

"Podge's grave?" he questioned.

"Yes."

He went and stood beside the grave, looking sadly down upon it.

"Faithful unto death," he murmured, lifting his cap. "He died like a brave soldier." He came back to her. "Dorothy, these past four years have been trying, cruel ones for the women of the South." She silently and gravely inclined her head. "War is pitiless, it spares no one," he continued. "It has brought me—here." He paused but she did not speak. "Dorothy, have you regretted the promise you gave me four years ago, when I told you of my intention to join the Union army? Have these four cruel years caused you to regret it?"

"No," she replied, steadily. "There is nothing that could cause me to regret it save to find you unworthy. That you have not been." She pointed to the epaulettes on his shoulders. "These prove that you have fought bravely for the cause you believe to be just. I am proud of you."

His grave face lighted. He took her gently in his arms and kissed her.

"Robert," she said, as he released her, "your mother is here." He started and looked at her eagerly. "You will find her in the lilac walk. Go to her; she is breaking her heart for you. Comfort her if you can."

He found his mother standing where in the spring the white and purple lilac bloomed riotously. He stood for a moment, with aching heart, looking at her unobserved. Yes, she had grown old in those four years. She was pale and sad and worn, and her hair had turned white.

He went toward her, murmuring, "Mother! mother!"

She looked at him, with a great and incredulous joy dawning in her eyes. The woman who was to be his wife had winced at the sight of the blue uniform of the North. His mother looked only at the face of her son. She went to meet him with longing, outstretched arms.

"My boy! my boy!" she cried, aloud.

He folded her in his arms. She clung about his neck, sobbing, murmuring incoherent words of love and tenderness and joy, her pale cheek pressed lovingly against the blue uniform of the Union.

After a moment she lifted her head and studied his face with loving eyes. "Dear, you have changed," she said. "The boyishness has all gone from your face."

"I have grown four years older, mother," he declared, with a smile.

"Four years!" she repeated, drearily. "Oh, what long, long, miserable years! When will this cruel war end?"

He shook his head. "I do not know." He paused a moment, and then asked, "Has my father changed toward me, mother. Has he relented?"

"Alas, no!" she replied, sorrowfully.

He gave a sigh. The sun had dropped behind old Massanutten, leaving the top of the mountain bathed in golden light, while down in the Valley the shadows were gathering heavily. A bugle note pierced the silence, awakening the echoes.

"I must go, mother, dear," declared Captain Stuart.

"Oh, it is so hard to let you go!" she sobbed

He held her close a moment longer, pressed his lips to cheek, then gently released himself and turned away. He found Dorothy waiting for him. He took her in his arms and kissed her.

"God bless you, my darling!" he murmured, and then he went away, leaving her standing by Podge's grave.

CHAPTER XIII

FURY OF A WOMAN SCORNED.

Upon her return from the Federal headquarters, Marguerite went and knocked upon her sister's door. After a moment or so, the door was opened by Christine, her face white and haggard, her red-gold hair falling in disorder about her shoulders. Her face darkened at the sight of Marguerite.

"What do you want?" she asked, coldly.

"I want to speak to you, Christine," Marguerite replied. "Please let me come in."

Christine hesitated a moment, then she moved aside and permitted Marguerite to enter. Marguerite turned to her pleadingly.

"Christine, tell me, that you did not mean what you said," she murmured, "that you hated me."

Through narrowed lids Christine looked at her in silence, studying the soft, babyish beauty of her face, the slim, girlish grace of her figure.

"What is there about you to win the love of a man like Colonel Warwick?" she said, after a moment, with a mixture of bitterness and contempt.

Marguerite flushed. "I never dreamed that he cared for me until—last night," she murmured.

"You were very apt in alluring him for a person apparently so inexperienced and unsophisticated," exclaimed Christine, sneeringly.

Marguerite paled under the cruel taunt.

"Don't, Christine," she pleaded. "You know why I acted as I did. It was the only way to prevent my father's being taken prisoner." She lifted her head and looked steadily, bravely, at Christine. "I would do the same thing again if it had to be. But Colonel Warwick will not suffer," she went on to explain. "I have been to General Sheridan and told him just how it was." She suddenly broke down and began to cry. "Oh, Christine, don't be unkind to me!" she sobbed. "It was so hard to do."

Christine looked at her unmoved. She had never felt much affection for her half-sister. They were too utterly unlike to be congenial. Now what little affection she had for her had turned to hate, the jealous, bitter hate of a woman scorned. She waited with unconcealed impatience for Marguerite to grow calm. The girl controlled herself after a few moments.

"You ask me if I really meant it when I said I hated you," said Chirstine.

"Yes; I cannot believe that you did mean it, Christine," declared Marguerite. "We are sisters, the same mother bore us, the same blood runs in our veins. Christine, sister, if I have wronged or hurt you, it was done unwittingly. Please forgive me."

The girl was exquisitely sweet and gentle as she pleaded. The unhappy woman, as she watched her with jealous eyes, realized that it was just her gentle, tender womanliness that had appealed to the brave Northern soldier, and proved more potent that her own beauty, charm, and enticement. But this knowledge only rendered her the more bitter, the more relentless.

"I cannot forgive you," she declared. "I shall never cease to hate you. I cannot help it," as Marguerite gazed at her with something like amazement. "You and I cannot dwell beneath the same roof. I shall return to the North. I hate the South! I have always hated it! Now, leave me. There is nothing more to be said between you and me."

Very sadly Marguerite moved toward the door. A sudden thought struck Christine. She drew her breath quickly. "Do you love Colonel Warwick?" she asked.

Marguerite stopped and looked back at her with a startled expression in her eyes. Then slowly her eyes fell and the color mounted to her cheeks.

"I—I don't know," she replied, falteringly.

And then she went out, with Christine's mocking, cruel, furious laugh ringing in her ears.

(Concluded next week.)

* * *

In the Morning.

"Has father gone?"

"Why, Pop's been gone for an hour, sleepy boy. Why do you ask?"

"Nothing, sister—nothing. Pour my coffee. What's that you say?"

"Brother, dear—won't I do?"

"I don't know what you mean, Sis."

"Yes, you do. What is it you want to tell dad?"

"Nothing you'd understand, you chump. Ain't that like a girl? Where's the toast? What makes the coffee so cold.? Sis, why——"

"What did you talk to dad about, brother? Why, Buddie, what are you crying about?"

"I ain't crying, you fool girl. Pass the toast."

"Brother, dear, did you lose anything playing poker last night?"

"Cut that stuff out. I didn't go to the club last night, and——"

"What's her name?"

"Her name is—see here, what do you mean by what's her name?"

"Is she pretty, brother. What size are her hands, now? Six—or five?"

"Where's that glove, Sis, and where did you find it? Give it to me at once, or I'll——"

"What will you do?"

"Give it up, and I'll buy you a pair just like it."

"All right, brother, dear. They cost six dollars. But what's her name? Do I know her?"

* * *

Tight Fittings.

Somehow mother had never quite cottoned to Angelina's young man. Many a time she had meant to have it out with him, and at last an opportunity arose.

"Mr. Simpkins," she began impressively. "I am informed by an acquaintance that you are employed by a firm of pork butchers."

The young man looked pained and crestfallen, but quickly recovered his composure.

"Yes, that is so. But——" he faltered.

"And," went on the old lady, trembling with indignation, "you led Angelina to believe that you were a costumer.'

The detected swanker blushed again; but he was a quick-witted young man and inspiration came to him.

"Well," he replied defiantly, "and so I am. You see, I put the tights on the sausages."

THE VANISHED CAPTAIN

Or, THE STOLEN RED EYE .:.:.:. By FRANK E. CHANNON

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CHAPTER IX.
THE CHESTNUT TREE.

THE chilling wind that had come on again as morning broke, did not permit them a long wait, and one by one the men arose and stamped about to keep themselves warm. The Judge, always thoughtful for the inner man, from his capacious pockets brought out a great silver flask and some sandwiches, and a bite and a snack was indulged in all around. It was after eight when the little skiff bearing Ben Oliver and Sam shot around the bend and darted toward them. The dogs with the sheriff and the two rowers first crossed in safety, carried far down stream, however, despite the efforts of the fisherman. The Judge, Stamford, and Sam soon joined them, and then the united party mustered again on the opposite side, where the dogs at once located the scent, not fifty yards from where they landed, just above Scott's Landing.

The way now led up a steep bank, still densely treed with pine, making their path dark and uncertain; in fact, there was no path, for the trail led them straight into the dark forest, and took them crashing and trampling through the underbrush and foot-deep layers of accumulated dead leaves of years. Siguford, finding the scent plain and strong, had forged ahead, but Ben had once more taken charge of the hounds, and held them close in check, the rest of the party following close behind. Mr. Charrington and Stamford were engaged in earnest conversation.

"It begins to look now, sir, as if the Captain had been kidnaped," suggested the young Englishman, appealing to his uncle's friend.

The latted nodded. "It looks that way, my boy," he admitted, "but," he added, "it also looks as if we should come up with him and whoever has captured him. I confess," he went on, "that I am utterly at a loss to fathom this affair; it is altogether incomprehensible to me. Now, tell me, Stamford, had the Captain—that is, did he keep about him any considerable sum of money?"

"No, sir," promptly responded the nephew; "on the contrary, I happen to know that he was short, uncomfortably so, for he had requested me only the previous day to get Peter to take his battery of guns to town and obtain a loan on them—he has done that on one or two occasions during the time I have been with him. His remittance is not due from England for three weeks yet, and he always gets cramped a week or so before that arrives. On other occasions he has pledged things, and afterward redeemed them as soon as the money came; so, you see, sir, I am sure he had no cash at all to speak of."

"Hum—hum," muttered the Judge. "The complications become thicker. Now, my boy, tell me, have you formed any opinion regarding that attack upon my daughter?"

"No, sir, I have not. I cannot account for it. Everything has moved so rapidly during the past few hours that I admit I have not given it very much thought; I have been so engaged in trying to understand the disappearance of uncle."

"Ben tells me," suddenly remarked Mr. Charrington, "that you fell into the river yesterday afternoon, and were carried far down the current to Sandy Landing. You had a most wonderful escape, Stamford, and should thank God for your deliverance. How came you to fall in?"

"Why, sir, I had gone out for a stroll. Uncle was—well, you know—the house was unbearable, so I went out and took a constitutional. I managed to slip—I suppose—from the rocks, for they are beastly slippery, and——"

"Why do you say, 'supposed'? Don't you know whether you slipped or not?"

Stamford looked uncomfortable. "Oh, well, you know, sir, I suppose every one is rather inclined to blame a mishap to something other than himself, but really, I can't see even now how I came to slip. I was tramping along over the high bluff just above Difficult, but I was going slowly and making, as I thought, sure of my feet, when suddenly—there, I know you'll laugh, sir—but by Jinks, I could almost swear something shoved me, a rattling hard shove, too, and sent me over into the river below. I luckily fell clear of the rocks, and landed right in the river, which took me along at a clipping pace, and I pulled out all right at Sandy Landing, half a mile below, none the worse for the ducking; but, by Jove, it was a bally odd thing! I can't see how in the dickens I came to fall in; hanged if I can!"

Mr. Charrington had been listening attentively as the young man related his adventure and escape. The going was easy now, and they were able to talk and yet keep up with the party. Now, assuming his cross-examination tone, the Judge asked:

"What time did you leave the house, Stamford?"

"Oh, I should judge about three, sir; possibly a little later."

"And you made straight for the Potomac?"

"Yes, sir. It was my intention to go up river and cross the bridge, looking Ben up at his cottage and spending an hour there with him, but this accident happened, and it was half-past four, or perhaps later, when I did finally get there. He kindly lent me some clothes, and in those I went back home, where I saw the Captain lying on the couch, morbid and melancholy, as he usually is when he's in these drunks of his."

"And then?"

"And then—well, you know the rest, sir. I told you I went up to dress, and then you came, you remember."

"Yes, yes," agreed the Judge, looking very thoughtful. "Now, tell me, Stamford, have you any reason to suspect Peter. Is he all right? Are you positive about that?"

"Oh, yes, sir, certainly he is. Why, he's been in the family for years—long before I can remember. He was uncle's valet when he was out in India as naval attache to the Viceroy. Peter's all right, poor old chap; he wouldn't harm a fly, and as faithful as that dog," and the young man pointed to Siguford, just at that moment tearing back at full gallop, his great tongue lolling out, his eyes ablaze with excitement, and every part of him giving evidence of intense emotion. He leaped straight at Stamford, and gripping him by the coat, made frantic endeavors to urge him along. Every one turned to observe the behavior of the great dog.

"He's got some'at, sure!" cried Alf Green, starting back from the position he held at the head. "Let him take yah, sir, let him take yah. Have yah gun handy, sir; we all air with yah. Hold back thar, Jedge, that's my place. Trot 'long thar, Sam; get 'long, yah niggar; move those legs on yah."

Sam needed no urging. With the leathers wrapped around each huge ebony wrist, he allowed Pepper and Salt to drag him along at breakneck pace, Siguford and Stamford outstripping him, however, for the young Englishman was swift as a greyhound, and now was nerved up for almost anything. Behind them tore the deputy and the rest, with the old Judge making desperate efforts to keep up with them.

In a few moments Stamford Hamilton found himself alone with the big mastiff, who kept forging ahead and then returning, as if urging greater speed. The pair tore along through the obstructions, regardless of all opposition, the English lad with his Colt tightly grasped in his right hand. From the rear came shouts, as Alf Green called upon them in vain to stay. The deep baying of Sam's leashed hounds sounded furiously through the dense forest.

"Get along, Sig, get along, old boy, I'm with you!" urged Stamford, as now and again the mastiff halted and turned to note if he was understood and being followed. "He has found something; he's found something for certain," muttered the youth, as he tore along in hot pursuit.

But when at length the dog stayed and waited for his master, Stamford found nothing but a great chestnut tree, around whose mighty trunk and leafless, gnarled branches Siguford leaped and circled furiously..

"Well, where, where?" demanded Stamford. The only reply was a greater and more earnest outbreak than before, the mastiff making extraordinary efforts to leap up into the lower branches.

Stamford's eye quickly took in the chestnut from base to loftiest bough. It was bare and could conceal nothing. Again he glanced inquiringly at his dog. "Well?" he again demanded, in perplexity.

He was on the point of making a search around, when his keen eyes observed something almost at the very summit that looked like—like—like a rope. Why, it was a rope, beyond doubt. It was knotted to a mighty branch, and the loose end dangled down some fifteen feet, swaying in the heavy gusts of wind.

By this time the search party was within hail, and Stamford waited for their arrival. They came panting and tearing up, Sam, with the hounds, and the deputy in the lead. Silently, with a gesture, Stamford pointed up to the swinging rope. Green's eyes followed his motion, and both men stood there gazing at it, all the dogs now joining in noisy recognition that the scent ended here at the base of the big chestnut.

"Yah all'll have ter git up," announced the deputy, nodding to the crowd in general; "I never was no good at climbing."

The words had scarcely left his lips before Stamford had stuck his revolver in his hip pocket, and was swarming into the lower branches, his dog trying in vain to follow.

Up, up he climbed, swiftly and skilfully, scarcely staying a moment, but swinging or crawling rapidly from limb to limb and from branch to branch until he reached the lower end of the dangling rope. He seized and tugged at it. It held fast. The branches were few here at the top, and after making sure that the rope would hold, he hung to it and climbed up hand over hand, going it like an old sailor, the men below watching his progress with bated breath and intense attention.

At the very summit where the rope was secured, he stayed, and holding fast with one hand, waved the other to those below in token that he was at his goal and safe.

"Wall," yelled Alf Green, expectantly. "What yah all find?"

"Nothing but the rope," the lad shouted back. "It's fastened to the bough, and—oh, wait a minute—yes," he cried, "at the end of it is a chain and a kind of a—a—a thing—an iron thing that's hooked into the tree—yes, it's fastened to the tree."

"Wall, I swear!" ejaculated the deputy, endeavoring to make out what the lad was describing. "Wish ter God I could climb up," he growled under his breath.

"What had he better do?" tersely demanded the Judge. "Don't keep him up there in that exposed position all day; it must be bitterly cold up there. You had better come down, Stamford, if you have discovered all there is," he called through his funneled hands.

"All right, I will in a moment. Let me look around first," came back the reply, and the climber proceeded to crawl about gingerly in the swaying tops of the tree.

A few moments later and he was descending. He came down slowly, observing closely as he came, and in a few minutes stood again amongst them, while they clustered around, plying him with questions.

CHAPTER X.
THE JUDGE SHOOTS.

"It's a rope—a big one," Stamford explained, in reply to a volley of questions. "It's an inch thick at least, and within about two feet of the top. A chain is spliced to it, and the end of that is secured to the trunk with a strong iron hook thing—looks like an anchor. Why it would hold an elephant."

"What the devil can it be up there for?" growled the Judge, still craning his neck upward.

"Throw them dogs around a bit, yah niggar," ordered the deputy. "See if they can't pick up no scent around har. Maybe they went up this tree and come down another; could easily have done that, and then made off."

With difficulty the hounds were persuaded to withdraw, but although Sam put them in at various points all about, not a trace did they pick up. They gravitated with one accord back to the base of the big chestnut.

"It's up that, sure 'nuff," admitted Green.

"If they, whoever they may be," observed the Judge, slowly, "had wished, they could travel for almost miles on the treetops. They grow thick enough about here, I'm sure; but I am quite at a loss to explain for what purpose that cable is secured aloft there. Can any of you suggest anything?"

There was no reply. All the men were silent; only the incessant baying of the dogs broke the silence of the morning. The moment was perplexing. The question what to do and where to take up the trail was in every one's mind. Not one could offer any suggestion. Each stood about engaged in consideration. It was a deadlock.

"I wish," observed Stamford, musingly, "that you could see that iron thing. I really believe it is an old ship's anchor; it looks just like one."

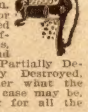
"An anchor, did you say?" demanded the Judge, in tones of a man making a find. "An anchor, lad. What is its shape? How big is it? My old eyes can see nothing of it from this distance."

"It's like this," explained Stamford, taking the rifle from the deputy's hand, and making a rude sketch with the butt of it in the dirt, "but it has three prongs, or whatever you call them; kind of a grappling iron, you—oh, I say," he burst out in boyish excitement, a light springing into his eyes, "what a duffer I was not to think of it before! Why, of course, it is a grappling iron; it's a—a—a what do you call it? Why, by Jove, sir, it's what they use in balloons! It's what they catch on with, you know, when they're coming down—it's a——"

"Wall, I figure as they ain't taken the Captain 'way in a balloon now. Sure, now, you don't mean ter say that now, Mr. Hamilton?" interrupted the deputy, a broad grin expanding over his features.

"Stamford," requested Mr. Charrington, ignoring the sheriff's interruption, "I dislike to ask you to go up again, but I wish you would do it all the same, and bring that thing down, will you please?"

"Certainly sir. If you'll stand away from under here, I'll go up and pitch it



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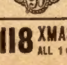

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down; it's quite heavy, you know, and I couldn't get down with it very well without a lot of trouble. I wonder I didn't think to do that when I was up there, but I was so concerned in looking for anything else."

The young Englishman had become quite excited, a most unusual thing for him. He spoke quickly, breaking off his words in a short, jerky manner. Next instant he was again in the lower boughs and fast ascending.

"Stand clear!" he shouted down, as he seated himself astride the topmost limb a few minutes later, and tugged at the weighty iron. The little knot of men had already withdrawn some distance, and a moment later a three-pronged massive piece of iron came down with a crash to the earth, while Stamford continued his descent. Alf Green pounced upon it, but the Judge was almost as quick, and immediately took it from the deputy's hands.

"Of, course, of course," he said, shortly, "it's a balloon anchor—nothing more or less.

"A bal-loon!" gasped Ben Oliver, looking curiously at the big piece of metal. "But it don't foller, Jedge, as thar was a balloon up there; it don't do that now, do it?"

"No," retorted Mr. Charrington, "that does not follow; of course—in fact, in fact——" he stopped and again closely examined the piece of evidence. "In fact," he resumed, "it might have been used for climbing, but, but—well, there are some very interesting points suggested by its discovery. Hey, there, Stamford, my boy, come down easily. Easy, there, easy!" This to the Englishman, who was coming recklessly down from his climb.

A moment later he stood amongst them. "What is it—a balloon anchor?" he demanded, eagerly.

"It looks uncommonly like one, but I——"

"They don't anchor balloons to the tops of trees, do they, Jedge?" again interrupted the deputy.

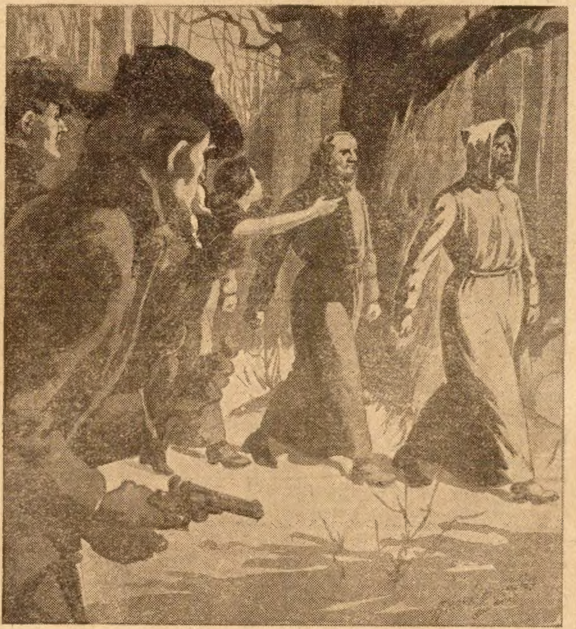
"Scarcely," drawled Mr. Charrington, "but if—if there has been any sort of air machine crossing this forest, this anchor might quite easily have—but, there—I don't think that's possible after all," concluded the worthy Judge, haltingly, as he mumbled along in his line of surmise and argument.

"Wall, I swear, this har thing's a-gettin' most devilish puzzling," growled Alf Green, as he stared and stared and scratched and scratched his head. "It do beat all—a bal-loon, yah says, Jedge? Wall, I swear! What kan yah all make of that, sir?"

"Nothing at present," snapped Mr. Charrington, and walked quickly back and forth in short little turns. Presently, after a couple of minutes furious stalking back and forth, he halted abruptly before Stamford and Alf Green.

"See here," he growled, "we have this, at least, for sure. The Captain and his presumed captors left by way of the roof, came down that rope affair we saw, came across the river to this tree, and here the trail stops—that's fairly plain so far. We have reason, so you say, Green—in fact, you're sure that there was a struggle some distance back—so we have reason to suppose that the Captain was an unwilling companion of these abductors, whoever they are. Now, then, at the top of this chestnut tree is a balloon anchor, or, rather, it was there until Stamford brought it down. It would appear, then, on evidence so far to hand, that this tree was scaled and the Captain taken up. If he was taken to the top, where did he go? Did they take him along over the tops and make a descent at some other point further on? If so, it must have been some distance, for the dogs can find no trace of it hereabouts.

"Now, I'll tell you, boys, just what conclusion I have come to. It may appear rather wild and improbable to you, but I can reach no other opinion. It is that some kind of an air machine, either dirigible or 'plane, has passed over this forest, probably making fast to this very chestnut around which we are standing; that the Captain was forced up and into that air machine, and has been carried off in it. There now!"



A ghostly-looking procession.

The Judge flung back his head, drew himself up to his full height, and stood waiting for any contradicting voice to be raised. Stamford looked thoughtful and said nothing. The deputy scuffled discontentedly in the loose earth with the toe of his big boot. Ben Oliver stood gazing up at the swaying tops of the tree in deep perplexity. The two farmers seated themselves resignedly to await developments. Sam fussed with the dogs, which became more and more impatient at the delay, seemingly realizing their own helplessness, and demanding that the humans do something to give them a chance. Suddenly, Stamford, who was gazing moodily about, pointed to the big mastiff. "Look," he exclaimed, "he's acting like he did at the cottage! What's the matter, Sig, what's the matter?"

Siguford had come crouching close up to his master, his tail tucked between his legs, his tongue moistening his nose constantly in a nervous, ill-at-ease way. Now and again he uttered a low half-growl, half-whine, as if he were struggling against his fears and striving to conquer them. Then he turned resentfully, half in anger, toward the base of the big tree, and so stood, refusing to be driven away, yet afraid to advance toward it.

"That is odd," commented Mr. Charrington, with emphasis. "Damned odd," he repeated. "What's the trouble with you, you cur? Get up!" and he endeavored to force the hound toward the tree. Siguford could not be induced to go, however. He wrenched himself away from the Judge's grasp and backed away, his hair bristling up with fear and anger. A moment later, and Pepper and Salt evinced like signs, and despite all upbraidings from Sam, utterly refused again to be put near the tree. All three dogs now stood at a respectful distance, growling in anger, yet afraid to advance.

Ben Oliver, a devout Catholic, descended from one of the old Catholic families of Maryland, crossed himself solemnly; while the Judge, after the manner of his Cavalier ancestors, was unawed, and continued to give vent to explosive volleys of oaths. Stamford, like the Englishman he was, showed neither excitement nor wonder, but again commenced minutely to examine the ground roundabout; while the deputy, unafraid, tried in vain to see what was amiss, his helpers standing watching him.

"Thar ain't nothin' thar!" he exclaimed. "What 'n thunder's the trouble with the beasts? Git in thar, you dogs! Whatchew crouchin' back thar fur? Git up, git in!"

It was useless. Not a hound would move. Neither would they retreat further. They stood on the defensive. Alf Green wheeled about with a disgusted expression toward Mr. Charrington. "Whatchew goin' ter do 'bout it, Jedge?" he demanded. "The beasts is scarted, though what the mischief at, I can't see, can, yah?"

"No, I can't," testily replied the worthy Judge.

"There is nothing there," asserted Stamford, appearing from the other side of the tree; "not a thing."

"They sees something as we all don't," muttered Ben Oliver, earnestly. "Dogs can see what folks can't, you know, sir," he explained, appealing to Mr. Charrington.

"Oh, rot!" exploded the old gentleman. "My eyes are none too good nowadays, but if there was anything there I could see it, and you recollect that, Ben."

"There is nothing there—not a thing," confirmed the young Englishman, "but—but——" He stopped, at a loss quite to explain just what he meant.

"Wall, I ain't a-going ter stand har all——" commenced Ben, when the words were frozen in his mouth by a sound that proceeded apparently, from the heart of the chestnut.

Not one of the seven men could have sworn just from what part that sound did come, nor yet the nature of it, but all stood for a space staring at the tree. It was as if the wind were moaning, but all knew it was not the wind. It became louder and louder, increasing in strength, as if discovering, as it proceeded, its power. In five seconds it had become a prolonged, hoarse, uncanny whistle; then, in another three ticks, it had developed into a shrieking hoot; and underlying it all was a sound as if steam were escaping from a boiler under terrific pressure. An all-pervading odor was about and around them—a strong smell of spirits—of whisky. There was no doubt of the nature of the odor to the Judge's trained nostrils; it was whisky, straight whisky—the mellow smell of good rye.

The old gentleman was the first of the party to recover from his astonishment. Whipping his hand to his hip, he was handling his six-shooter in a flash. With a bulldog expression he advanced toward the chestnut. His face was crimson, almost purple with anger and annoyance. "Get out of there! What monkey tricks are you playing? Where are you? Get out, man, or I'll pump lead into the tree."

The only reply was a louder and more prolonged shrieking hoot, and a yet fiercer escape of the steam sound, but there was no sign of it.

"Don't shoot, sir!" cried Stamford. "Don't shoot If there's any one in there you can get them out without that. It isn't hollow, though," he muttered to himself under his breath; "it's as sound as a die."

The Judge glared for a brief moment

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at the young Englishman; then his revolver was leveled, and the next instant it spoke—"crack, crack"—two reports in rapid succession, and the wood resounded to the echo. "My God, boy, no man's going to make a monkey of me!" he ejaculated, as he paused to note the effect of his shots.

There were two spots of torn bark—that was all. But the hooting died away, and the odor was scarcely perceptible.

The Judge watched the smoke from his revolver drifting away in the wind, and then again his voice was raised. "Whoever you are, come out, or I'll order the sheriff to let go his Winchester into you. I'll give you five seconds. One, two, three, four, five—shoot, there, Green!"

Obediently the deputy brought his gun to his shoulder, and the two barrels spoke almost simultaneously, the balls tearing deep holes in the trunk.

"Don't shoot any more, sir!" cried Stamford. "You can see that tree's as sound as a dollar."

"Who's there, then?" fiercely demanded Mr. Charrington. "Who's trying to make asses of us all. By God, sir, I'll see the end of this business if I kill a dozen men!" The hot-blooded old Virginian was almost beside himself with rage and annoyance. He had stumbled against a problem that was beyond his comprehension, and true to his breed, he could think of no other way to solve it but by his gun. "I've stopped their damn stink, anyway?" he growled. "Stick your shells in and let her go again, Green!"

"'Tain't no good, sir; this har gun won't take through three feet o' chestnut—that tree ain't holler, Judge," remonstrated the deputy.

"Well, what the devil—who the devil, then——" and the old gentleman relapsed into a condition of speechlessness, as he strode up and down, around and around the tree, rapring it angrily with the grip of his revolver. It gave back a dead, solid sound. The screeching hoot had died completely away; the odor had ceased; the echo of the report had stopped, and all was still in the great wood.

CHAPTER XI.

THE GHOSTLY PROCESSION.

"Jedge," muttered Ben Oliver, in awe, "thar's somethin' thar as we all can't understand—come 'way, sir, 'come 'way——"

"Come away, nothing!" angrily burst out Mr. Charrington, shaking off the detaining hand of the big fisherman. "There's no man, no thing, living or dead, that's going to bluff me out. There must be a reason for all this, and I'm going to get at the truth. If you're afraid, Ben, go home."

The giant looked almost reproachfully at Mr. Charrington. His lips parted as if to speak, but no words came; he lapsed into silence.

"Now, then," resumed the Judge, in businesslike tones, "come along, boys, and get busy. Green, you and your two boys get round the other side, and you, Stamford, help me with—well, I'm——" The Judge stopped, the orders freezing in his mouth.

It was small wonder, for clear and distinct as a silver bell sounded the loud sob of a woman—the same heart-breaking sob that he had heard when, the night before, he had forced his way into Captain Hamilton's receptionroom at the cottage. The sound of a woman's grief aroused all the chivalrous impulses in the old Virginian, and his tone instantly changed to one of courteous, solicitous inquiry.

"My dear lady," he called aloud, in genuine concern, "be so good as to inform us where you are, and who you are, and we will at once come to your assistance. Pray, madam, do not hesitate; we are all gentlemen here, and will immediately right any wrongs you have suffered." Again his hand stole to his hip, where he had replaced his revolver, and he stood ready for any emergency.

"It come from that thar tree," announced Alf Green, with decision. "It sure did, Jedge."

"Let's chop the blamed tree down, then," suggested one of the helpers. "Me and Joe both got axes."

"It's more'n an hour's work, but I'll go you, John," acquiesced the other man, as he seized his ax and started toward the tree.

"Shall we?" inquired the first man, appealing to the Judge.

"Oh, there's no reason or sense in that course," objected Stamford. "Look here, Mr. Charrington, you know that chestnut's solid, and I know it is. What's the good of wasting time like that?"

"Jedge, Jedge," again interrupted Ben Oliver, plucking at Mr. Charrington's coat; but the Virginian shook him off, with a gesture of impatience.

"Be quiet, be quiet!" he snapped, testily.

"Oh, look, look! My God, look! There he is, Jedge, and oh, oh, look!" burst out the big fisherman, starting back and pointing one horny finger to a point just beyond the tree.

Small need was there for him to indicate the sight. Every one of the group of men saw it, and all stood still, staring, staring in fascination at it. Clear and plain as their eyes could tell them, they saw before them, not ten feet the other side of the chestnut, a ghostly-looking procession of individuals. First, a white-robed, dignified, bearded man, slight of stature, but carrying himself like a king. Then Captain Richard Kline Hamilton, at whose side tottered along—now almost prone on the ground, now endeavoring to arise, now stumbling after him, with clutching hands that sought to detain him—a woman, clothed completely from neck to ankles in black; whose bare, white, rounded arms, raised aloft, as she clutched in desperation at the slowly-moving Captain, stood out in startling contrast against her somber garb. The Captain glanced neither to right nor left, but with eyes like those of a sleep-walker, followed obediently in the steps of his guide. He was clothed in a robe of startling blood red. Three feet behind him followed another white-robed figure, tall, angular and stern, whose solemn, coal-black eyes were fixed upon the moving figure of the man before him. Only one sound broke the silence—the sobbing of the woman.

For a second—only a second—but it seemed an age to the watchers—the grim procession passed before them; then, with a furious oath, the game old Virginian had leaped forward, revolver in clenched hand. Stamford was not an inch behind him. There was a flash, a report, a wild sob from the figure of the woman, and as the smoke cleared away, the scene had vanished, leaving the Judge, panting with suppressed excitement, with the smoking revolver in his hand, gazing in blank astonishment into thin air; while the young Englishman started back with bewildered expression and whitened face; and the deputy and his helpers huddled together, with the dogs groveling in abject fear at their feet. There was a crashing of the underbrush from the rear of the party, and Ben Oliver, with the negro Sam close at his heels, was tearing madly, recklessly away from the vanished scene.

Then a deathlike silence fell on all; only the lessening noise of the retreating feet of the two running men was to be heard, and in a few moments it died away to nothing, and the remaining men stood gazing at one another in blank, utterly-puzzled dismay.

"Which one did you aim at, Jedge?" whispered Alf Green, hoarsely.

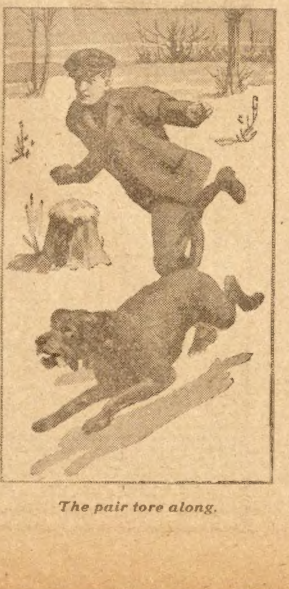
"The first one, and hit him, too," muttered Mr. Charrington; "but," he added, slowly, "the ball went clear through him." He stopped and glared at the men, as if challenging any one of them to dispute his word.

No one did. From away off in the distance came a hoarse whistle. All started, but it was only the noon-hour whistle sounding from the cement factory six miles away off across the river. Then Mr. Charrington spoke again.

"There is something here, boys, that I cannot fathom," he admitted. "I must have time to think, to consider. Come, let us go." He stuck his Colt back decisively in his pocket. Alf Green tucked his gun under his arm; the farmers shouldered their axes, and Stamford's hands went deep into his trousers pockets. The dogs kept close in surly fear, and with one accord the party turned and commenced to retrace their steps in the direction of the river.

It was a silent crowd. Each was deep in thought. The Judge pondered with puckered brows; Stamford followed, biting his lips, and the deputy was talking to himself under his breath. At the river bank they found the two runaways, looking sheepish and ashamed, but uncommunicative. In silence they made the trip across, and in silence they returned to the Captain's cottage, where old Peter greeted them with the nearest approach to an expression of joy that he was capable of.

"Get something to eat," Stamford commanded the waiting butler, "and serve the Judge and me in the Captain's den. See that the rest are comfortable, Peter. No, no, we discovered nothing—not yet." This in reply to the butler's unspoken question.


The pair tore along.

Half an hour later the popping of corks told that the morning's experience had not taken away the appetites, at least, of the men, but young Stamford ate or drank little. Only, as he watched his guest falling to upon the refreshment with a vim, his eyes would be elevated now and again, in a perplexed, puzzling way, and when at last the Judge leaned back in his chair, and gazed about the room, the young man looked him squarely in the eyes, as he inquired, "Well, what next, sir?"

"I'll be hanged if I know," growled the Virginian, and fell into a reverie.

It was Mr. Charrington who first resumed conversation. Stamford was buried deep in thought; he had apparently forgotten the existence of his uncle's old friend.

"Now, my boy," observed the jurist, leaning forward and tapping the younger man on the shoulder, "it occurs to me that we have never yet made an exhaustive examination of the Captain's bedroom. How about going over it? I can think of no other way to take up the lost thread. It is possible we might run across something there, for we only lightly touched upon that room the other night."

"Neither have we examined his room—his den—thoroughly," said the nephew. "Suppose we start in, Judge. Our search last night was hurried."

For over two hours they sought for any new evidence in the little den in which Captain Hamilton was used to spend so much of his time, but nothing was discovered. Then a move was made to his chamber. The trapdoor in the ceiling was still open; evidently old Peter had not dared to ascend. Through the opening came a cold draught from without. Stamford leaped up on the bed to close the opening, and as he did so, his eye fell on a half-sheet of paper, lying crumpled up and tucked in between the rumpled bedclothes and the tall footboard. He picked it up, and quickly smoothing it out, gazed in puzzled silence at it. "What is it?" he demanded, handing it to Mr. Charrington, who placed it on the little stand, and adjusting his glasses, scrutinized the writing. "It's not English; I can't make out what the letters are. Can you?" continued Stamford.

The Judge had become intensely interested, and with eyes close to the paper was studying it eagerly. He held up his hand as if asking for time, and the young man stood waiting impatiently while the old gentleman traced with his pencil the strange characters upon the sheet. Presently Stamford broke the silence again; "That paper is the queerest I ever saw, too," he complained.

"It isn't paper; it's papyrus, and the characters are not ours. My lad, this writing is in Sanskrit, or I've missed my hazard. It is very curious; most curious, in fact. I never saw anything like this outside of a museum, and I do recollect of seeing something like it in the British Museum some twenty years ago. It is Eastern, undoubtedly. Let me see," and the old gentleman again fell into a brown study, while Stamford took paper and tobacco from his pocket and commenced to roll a cigarette.

"This," continued the Judge, presently, "is most undoubtedly a link of some sort, and placing it by the side of our remarkable experience this morning, I should judge it to be a most important link. Stamford, my boy, I think that at last we have stumbled on something that may help us, and the good Lord knows we need it badly enough. I think we should at once get into the city and understand the contents of this remarkable-looking document. I want to run over first to change my clothes, and then suppose I meet you at the Reeves station and catch the three o'clock for Washington. We will then just have time to connect with my friend Doctor Hemmings before he leaves the Smithsonian, and I think he is the very man to help us in this difficulty."

"Very good, sir, I will accompany you. But what about the deputy and his friends?"

"We will call them off the scent for the present; but, of course you know, Stamford, that unless we can soon obtain information about your uncle, the case will have to be given into the hands of the attorney for the county; that will be the only proper course."

"Yes, of course, I understand that. I'll meet you at three at Reeves, sir. Let Peter drive you home at once."

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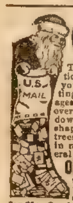

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The Captive Goddess

Or, THE FAR NORTH GUARD

By William H. Manning

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Begun in No. 46, November 16. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from the office of publication.

CHAPTER XIV.

WILL SHE UNDERSTAND?

AGAIN Gareau shifted his gaze to where John Lorrison and Jeremiah, awake but silent, still lay in their blankets. The exasperated captain was in mood to see active treachery in every man, but, for the moment, was sensible enough not to dwell upon his theory that Lorrison was a spy.

David, however, noting that glance, felt that Lorrison's position had suddenly grown precarious. Let Gareau seriously suspect him and there was a grave on Isle Boisee for the unfortunate gentleman.

The captain did not readily recover his composure, and those who knew him best were surprised that a bold, ready, reckless fighter should have a downcast mood. Really, he was finding that it was no matter of romance to guide a young man across the continent under present circumstances, and it was affecting his nerves. Presently he rallied and grew talkative.

"Have you looked to your wound, Martin?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Derg. "It is only a scratch."

"Good. I would not have you laid up now."

"All men are needed now."

"To row the boat, yes. But to fight Isaac Lane and his H. B. C. scum? Bah! I laugh at them. Give me three men and I will whip them all eight. What is a Hudson Bay man? A wolf that barks, bravely, but runs when a real man appears. Trust Gareau to baffle them! He is a gentleman of France, born hard by Bordeaux, where they grow men of red blood. Shall I grow pale when Isaac Lane pipes his H. B. C. note? Not I, voyageurs!"

"What can be their object in following us?" asked Pau, thoughtfully.

"Sent by the Hudson Bay Company!" Gareau snapped.

"Then our mission is known to our rivals."

"Known in part, though surely not wholly. Had they known, we would never have been allowed to pass beyond the Silver Wolf River."

"If they know, it is more than your own voyageurs know," reminded Grout, suggestively.

"Be at ease, Henri! If you do not know it is not because you are not trusted. Every man here is known to be worth his weight in gold. Ay, and with such help I will humble the Bay cowards!"

He rose, waved his hand widely, and swaggered about, but the call to the delayed breakfast cut off further boasting. The call appealed to him, and he attacked the pemmican and tea with appetite.

Lorrison and Jeremiah both showed the effects of their trials of the previous day, and the former was not only languid, but stiff and cramped. His long, desperate struggle for life had been exertion new to him, and its results were not easily conquered.

The lull in the rainfall continued, but black clouds swept thickly athwart the sky, and the wind still blew tirelessly. The weatherwise voyageurs prophesied several days like it.

David Reith was struggling with his own perplexities. More than ever he wanted to see the rival party on the island. He wanted to talk with Isaac Lane. But how was it to be done? Gareau was suspicious, shrewd, and watchful. Danger hedged the lone adventurer about closely.

After breakfast Gareau smoked and seemed to study the fire, but his mind was busy. Finally he rose, called Martin Derg and gave him control of camp, and then walked away northward. Reith did not doubt that he was going to consult with Ronald MacQuail.

Five minutes later the Goddess emerged from her tent, looked about her, and left camp. Her course, too, was north. David grew more deeply interested. She had doubtless gone because, addicted to open-air action, she wanted change from the narrow limits of the tent, but he saw suggestions of something else in this.

Doing some quick thinking, he slipped quietly out of the camp proper and took a course which, while not the same as that of his predecessors, was nevertheless, generally the same. By this move he had the Goddess under observation, a few rods away, and saw her trip lightly along, her gaze being shifted from point to point, as if she was interested in seeing what Isle Boisee had to offer in the way of tree, shrub, and plant.

The voyageur soon saw more. Farther on, but hidden from the Goddess by a group of low-limbed firs, two men stood in earnest conversation. They were Gareau and MacQuail. David's pulse quickened. He had wanted the Goddess to see McQuail, believing that the sight would open her eyes, and now she was walking straight toward that redoubtable Northwest Chieftain, who had no warning of her approach, and no time to hide.

Grimly Reith continued his espionage. The men talked on, and the girl walked on. She neared the firs and started to pass at one side. A few steps more, and she turned the corner of the trees and stopped short. The men stopped their talk with equal abruptness. With scarcely ten feet of space intervening, the Goddess was looking at Ronald MacQuail.

David stood still and watched further He saw that the appearance of the Goddess had given the men a start, and that their conversation ended abruptly, but Gareau recovered quickly, and, plainly, introduced his companion. MacQuail had no alert, lively French blood to help him, and his mind was that of the plodding class of Anglo-Saxons, so he plucked his hat off clumsily and as clumsily bowed.

The girl seemed wholly at ease and she acknowledged the introduction and spoke readily, though there was no cordiality back of it. There was nothing to show that she claimed to know the new man by sight, but the watcher could have sworn she did. Her manner told him that. No longer hoodwinked she was acting her part—so he believed

"They will not deceive her!" thought Reith. "She cannot be made to believe that MacQuail, zealous Northwester, is a friend to her!"

Whatever she thought, she spoke a few words without hesitation, and then bowed again and walked on. Gareau started, called to her, pointed to the wet ground and the lowering clouds, and seemed to urge her to return. Nature came to his aid, and when a dash of rain swept the island she turned back

David saw the two men look hard after her and speak rapidly, and then MacQuail sounded a bird-note that was clearly a signal, and the voyageur decided that prudence demanded his own presence in camp. He went, accordingly, and was just in time to see the Goddess enter her tent.

Ten minutes after Gareau came, too, and with him were MacQuail and a second man. The latter, small, slender, muscular, and quick of motion, had the swarthy complexion that marked the mixed French and Indian blood, all of which told their story, but they were not needed to place him. Reith recognized him as a voyageur of the Northwesters who bore the name of August Vallei.

Gareau introduced the men by their

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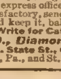

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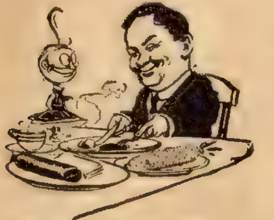

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rightful names, and soon August was smoking with his fellows, while the captain and MacQuail kept a little apart, and carried on a conversation as if only a commonplace expedition was under way.

David, keeping up a pretense of indifference, finally saw MacQuail turn his gaze upon John Lorrison. A while he studied, and then he looked back to Gareau and smiled indulgently. David read his look and manner as a verdict that Lorrison was perfectly harmless, but Gareau was not satisfied. He called the gentleman to them, and Reith ventured to go near enough to listen.

"Ronald," said the captain, "let me introduce Lorrison, once a celebrated ship captain of the lower St. Lawrence."

"Glad to see you Captain Lorrison!" asserted MacQuail, with Scotch bluntness.

"Permit me to make a slight correction," returned the gentleman. "I was never a captain of vessels."

"But you did a little sailing, eh, Lorrison?" mocked Gareau.

"A trifle," admitted the victim of this malicious jocularity, nervously.

"Under—what was the name of your captain?" asked Ferdinand. "Was it not Michaels?"

"It was Mordaunt!" replied Lorrison, with a ripple of courage.

Gareau laughed loudly, but really, he took on a bit of admiration for his victim, then and there. In his estimation a coward who could not lie was a poor sort of a man, and he liked the spirit that made the gentleman disown his pirate captain.

CHAPTER XV

DAVID GOES.

Gareau was not willing to let his victim off so easily. He had previously told MacQuail all that was necessary, but his disposition to annoy his gentleman companion was active.

"Of course, Mr. Lorrison, you are better informed as to those gay old mariners than I am. Yes, MacQuail, and in my conversations with him I have found him proud of the part he played at that time. He is frank to admit that he was once a real, genuine pirate, you see."

"Indeed, sir!" cried Lorrison, pale and agitated, "I have admitted nothing of the sort. I was never a pirate!"

"Bravely spoken!" exclaimed Gareau, as if in admiration. "This is, of course, for your private ears, MacQuail. I had forgotten that Lorrison asked me not to mention that he was once a cruiser under the black flag."

Poor Lorrison entered another denial, whereat Gareau laughed lightly and winked at MacQuail. It was a rare sport for him to badger this weak, white-haired man, and he knew just how to do it. MacQuail did not seem to appreciate the joke, and he remained so silent that Gareau finally dropped it and dismissed Lorrison much as he would a servant; but if MacQuail lacked the smallness of soul necessary to delight in vexing the helpless, he also lacked the manhood to reprove the captain. He remained as friendly as ever with Gareau.

Half an hour later David overheard the final words of another brief conversation. Gareau had seized the chance when Life Hand was looking out of the tent to motion to her, and the Indian woman came promptly. Reith lost the first of the talk, but finally managed to get near without seeming inquisitive.

"If she insists on leaving camp," said the captain, "do you keep beside her. No matter where she is, don't let anybody, no matter who, talk with her without your hearing every word. Understand?"

"I hear, Captain," returned the squaw.

"Be her shadow! Remember! Let nobody speak with her!"

"It shall be so, Captain." Life Hand stolidly answered.

"That is all, my good woman." The Indian went, and Gareau again fell to talking with the guest by his side.

David realized how important this was. His plan of having Lorrison speak with the Goddess, and weaken her trust in Gareau, was probably blighted in the bud. The captain did not intend to have any one undermine him.

But what was the girl's state of mind at present? She had seen MacQuail, a well-known Northwest leader; and had seen that he was very friendly with Gareau. Would not that serve better than outside words to put her on her guard?

Rain had been falling lightly, but it soon increased and, gathering volume and momentum steadily, bombarded Isle Boisee furiously. Everybody took to cover, Gareau and MacQuail utilizing the leader tent, and the voyageurs huddling partly under the boat and partly beneath half-roofs they had constructed of poles and covers from the inland boat.

David was not near Lorrison and dared not seek him; and, for that matter, it did not appear that the broken gentleman could be of any use in the game David designed playing.

What Reith now wanted was to see Isaac Lane. Lane and his men were the hope of the cause. What the men were, and how Lane was inclined of mind he did not know, but he hoped that serious argument with him would lead him to act with Reith. Although it was likely that he was bitter against the Hudson Bay Company, he was not an evil man, and it might be that he would sink all grudges. But how was he to be seen? David knew he would not be allowed to leave camp openly. How was he to see Isaac Lane?

The day wore on, and still the rain fell, and still the wind pounded away at Winnipeg and stirred its waters to foamy mountains that thundered incessantly on Isle Boisee. A wet, dreary day it was, and chill and uncomfortable, but David would not have had it otherwise. While the storm lasted they could not leave the island, and he wanted to see the battle fought out right there.

Darkness finally fell again. Beaten by a light rain the voyageurs had prepared supper with scant ceremony, but when they had partaken of food and drank well of tea, and then topped off with a smoke, they felt light-hearted again. But Captain Gareau did not intend the night should be all sleep. He came to them and spoke commandingly, though pleasantly.

"Sentinels must be set tonight, my lads," he announced. "Those knaves over yonder must be guarded against, or we shall be minus boat on the morrow. Sorry, voyageurs, but so it is, and I know you don't mind. Now, I will divide the watch into four parts. First, Vager and Chalifoux go on, then Findley and Roussin, then Derg and Grout, then Pau and Huot."

It so happened that one man there hailed the plan with joy, and that he kept silent. David believed that sentinel duty might give him a chance to slip away and see Lane, and he looked forward to the time on post with avidity. All but the sentinels sought their blankets, and after Reith fell asleep he knew no more until he was awakened by Grout. The latter took him to post and instructed him as to his beat, and then went to his own rest.

Off to the north another fire was visible, and David knew that it was that of the rival party. He could see nothing to prevent his going that way. He and Pau were to pace back and forth, covering the exposed territory next to the other fire, but their posts, as arranged, did not meet, and they were not directed to address each other, to compare notes. He did not see why he could not absent himself unknown to Pau.

He lost but little time. Slipping quietly away, he hastened toward the other camp. Well aware that his welcome there might be a bullet as first warning, he nevertheless trod boldly, and was soon close to where the fire blazed in ruddy light. He had seen no man, but a challenge suddenly rose as if from the earth near at hand.

"Halt!" was the single word. Reith promptly obeyed.

"If you want to live," proceeded the unseen, "go back! If you want to die, advance!"

"I want to see Isaac Lane!" explained Reith.

"He is not to be seen. Go back, or I fire!"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE NIGHT ATTACK.

David Reith stood steadfast. All talk had been in French, but he recognized the voice of the other man.

"I know you, Isaac Lane," he calmly replied. "If you will speak with me five minutes, you will not threaten me afterwards."

"It is not Ferdinand Gareau!" muttered the unseen man.

"It is not, nor is it a messenger from him. Lane, I am in haste, and your interests and mine require immediate speech between us. Come! meet me face to face!"

A burly figure rose from the bushes and came close to the visitor.

"Well," this man admitted, "I am Isaac Lane. What of it?"

(Continued on page nineteen.)

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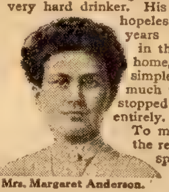

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CHRISTMAS SHOPPING

By Walter A. Sinclair

ABOUT the time the radiators are afflicted with chilblains, and poor cusses who have to support large families are just two skips ahead of the coal man's collector, some ready little dispenser of free advice rears up on his hind legs and beans the public with the blast:

"DO YOUR CHRISTMAS SHOPPING EARLY."

Now, this can be set to music or served with onions as a tasty little chafing-dish portion. Any boob wishing to slap dull care on the trousers can inhale this outburst, although there is nothing nourishing in free advice. Nor is it infectious, for it seldom takes and less seldom is taken. Though this advice is ladled out gratis, the one best bet is that very few people will do their Christmas shopping early, or sooner. This advice is like the limited flyer which passes through a suburb village. Nobody takes it.

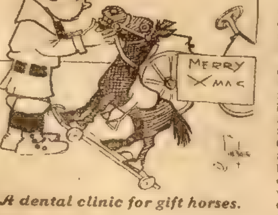
The annual, full-page screech, urging you to dash into the busy marts of trade about a week after Labor Day to garner your gifts for the festal season, makes good stuff for starting a fire in the range of a frost-bit morning, or goes niftily as a pantry-shelf lingerie. Still, you may be one of those exacting souls who inhale everything in the newspapers down to the death notices, or in other light reading, in order to get your nickel's worth. If so, bend an ear to this chatter.

Many open-faced zobs who nose into this line of junk along in December are so filled with righteous resolve that they slop over at the brim and have to dip into the buying game in order to have a clear conscience to snuggle on the uneasy pillow of nights. The popular thing is to pull back on the bridle until the last week before Christmas, and then, with a wild whoop, scamper into the big stores and get pocketed between a throng of maddened bargain seekers of the suffragette persuasion, who are slowly but expensively clawing their way to the counter where a few pallid dames are peddling the ninety-seven-cent sacrifices, reduced from the regular ninety-eight-cent rate.

Years of this festal jiu-jitsu weigh down on the recollection of the prospective gift-buyer like a short ton of anthracite, and he becomes obsessed with a ninety-horsepower determination not to be again mauled and squeezed in the melee. He subscribes to the entire platform of the Christmas Shopping-Early party, and goes out on a whirleash campaign.

The first degree is to compile, collate, and edit a list of all his deserving relatives and friends; then for a riotous orgy of blue-penciling the list down to a proper size. The iron ball hits the very distant relatives who haven't come through with any wampum for so long that the mind of man totters not to the contrary. Then the firing squad gets busy with the gooks who have pared down their appropriations to the quick in the past, and who show alarming symptoms of glacial feet for the coming glad day. The trapdoor for all poor relations and friends who can't be of much further use, and, then, after all this trimming, a final revision of the present Schedule K downward to the fewest candidates on the blue list. Following by fast freight comes the annual assembling of reserve cash on the frontier, and nothing remains but to declare hostilities as formally begun, ring the gong and follow the hat into the ring.

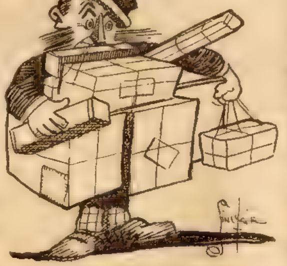
One invariably should start out without plastering a little food on the interior and while toting the makings of a small-bore headache. It is necessary also to crowd into a pair of the tightest shoes in order to cultivate the proper holiday spirit and a brace of water blisters. Equipped for the largest gob of discomfort at the smallest expense the trapper starts on a trek through Bargainland.



A dental clinic for gift horses.

It is customary to scout out the situation in advance with a few cutely contrived questions for the purpose of bringing to the surface the wishes of the dear ones in the matter of presents. Time was when a present was a present, to be grabbed feverishly, but now a present has to be somehting entirely bull's-eye, or it sours in stock.

The good old serpent's tooth is a cavity compared to the keen, cutting look of scorn dashed off by the receiver of a Christmas present which doesn't stack up to high hopes. Time was when one could coax a pair of slippers or galluses out of a ball of yarn, or maybe dab a yard of posies on a wooden bowl, or one could unbelt for a jack-knife, a mouth organ, a bottle of clamorous cologne, or a box of candied paint, and could get away with it as a Christmas present. Nothing like that now in our great human family. Failure to come through with a limousine, a set of furs, a diamond flush, or some such knickknack which represents a year's savings, sets the donor into the piker class. Handing gift horses free dental examinations is the one best bet as a popular parlor entertainment among the cheerful receivers. Better save the entire cost than to try to cut the corners on that matter of expense.



The eleventh-hour person.

It will be recalled, that we left our hero, or usually heroine, starting out early to stalk the elusive gift to its lair. Not yet being overheated with the Christmas spirit, he buys with a certain consideration for the tender feelings of his roll. Each case note that is separated from the parent concern is pared away as with a scapel. As a result, the cautious spender corrals a young stock of perishable freight into which have horned some items which really may be useful and needed by the giftee. Of course, this is dead against the rules, and has to get the hook.

Having plenty of time to scrape off the price tags and to have the junk packed early for sending, the premature exploder of coin disguises as a human being, and sticks the stuff away where the steam heat can dry the glue out of the hobby horses and doll chairs Along about the time the Carol family begins oiling up its vocal pipes, the advance purchases begin to crumble like antique crackers and to fall into the discard. If not put in cold storage the dolls are apt to simmer in a neat wax gravy, and the glue drops in large settings out of the wooden toys. The blush divorces the peach, so to speak, the phoney jewelry loses the sparkle, and the dye comes off the fake fur.

To err is human, and so is it to dig out the presents and give them a loving massage. Gift books get thumbprint identification records and are dog-eared from advance pawing by the donor. The gift candy either gums into a gooey mass or crumbles down to its original coaltar base, if it hasn't been half eaten up. In fact it gets caught off base trying to steal home.

In the good old elderly days there were big closets or spacious beds, in or under which were ideal hiding-places. Now the builder of modern apartments and houses paints the closets on the walls in a highly lifelike manner, which never is discovered until one tries to hang up a suit of clothes which isn't working. And the beds fold up into libraries or mirrors

Well do we remember those mysterious days before the glad season when it was the big noise to scare the children away from the closets and beds for fear the little dears would put in dictagraphs to find out what was there. In those days the precious angels fell for that Santa Claus stuff with an awful crash, but now they are waiting like honorary pallbearers when the store van backs up to dump a load of cheer on the doorstep with nothing to hide it in but a cellarette or a humidor. William J. Burns has absolutely zero on the trusting infants who prod the packages arriving during the festal season and who put parents through the third degree to make them tell what they are holding out.

The early bird's well-known catch doesn't appear to allure the present-day

(Continued on page sixteen.)

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All the clothes you want.
All the money you want.

To learn how you can have one of these stunning swell tailored suits absolutely free, not a penny of cost to you (we prepay the express); to learn how you can make $5.00 to $10.00 a day, every day of your life, to find out what **beautiful tailoring really is,** to offer styles that everybody goes wild about, to get all of your own clothes always free, do this to-day, now, this minute, write us a letter or postal and say, "Send me your New Wonderful Tailoring Offer," and receive by return mail, free, the most astonishing tailoring offer you ever heard of, a beautiful set of samples to pick from, styles that will set your county afire, an offer so surprising, so new, so liberal, so wonderful, you can hardly believe it.

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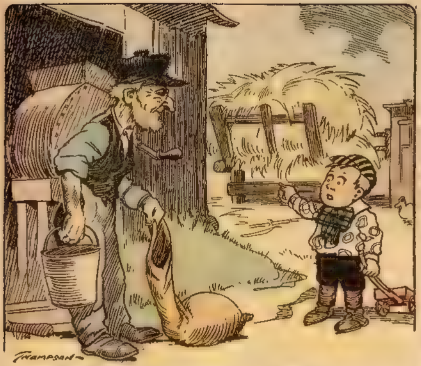


Little Harold—"What's that thing you're pouring oats into?"
Uncle S—"That's a grain hopper."
Little Harold—"And that rack where you put the grass—is that a grasshopper?"

Had a Tender Heart.

Mr. Caleys—"I thought both your girls played the piano."
Pa Hyles—"Mamie does, but Carrie never could stand to make others unhappy."

No Increase.

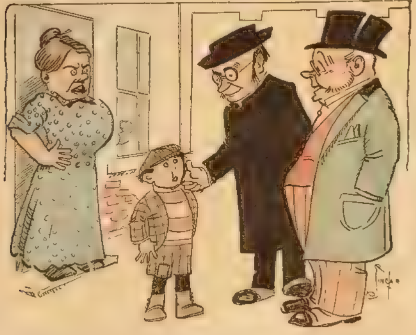
Winks—"The Daily Boomer claims to have doubled its circulation this year."
Jinks—"Don't you believe it. The Boomer hasn't been a bit wickeder this year than it was last."

Going Some!

Speeding Autoist—"Hark! That man shot at us."
Passenger (holding tight)—"The bullet has no chance."

Playing a Winner.

"You say you play every night at the casino and never lose. How do you manage it?"
"I play the trombone."



Clergyman (taking friend round poor parish)—"Yes, a nervous little fellow. I remember his father was highly strung."
Woman—"Ye remember wrong then. 'E got off wiv ten years!"

Henry's System.

Among the employes of an apartment house in Washington is a dusky elevator conductor, who would appear to have a "system" similar to that of the maid who announced to the guest at the door that she didn't hear her until she had rung three times.

"If any one calls, Henry, while I am out, tell him to wait. I shall be right back," said a woman to the boy in question.

No answer from the boy.

"Didn't you hear me? Why don't you answer?" demanded the woman angrily.

"I never answers, ma'am," explained Henry, "unless I doesn't hear, and then I says 'What?'"—Judge.

Wasn't Right.

An old man (if being 93 is old) walked along Kearny street somewhat laboriously. Although feeble physically, there was an air of prosperity about him. That was what attracted the attention of a touch artist.

"Say, mister," said the tramp, coming up, "would you help a poor fellow to get a meal?"

The old man looked him over and then exclaimed: "You ought to be ashamed of yourself, coming to me for help. Evidently you don't know that I am an orphan."

Mrs. De Peyster—"Does your husband work now?"
Mrs. Crosstreet—"Oh, no. Lem's within two years of breakin' the no work record for Swanville."

Couldn't Make Up Mind.

"Have you purchased your new car yet, Miss Nooritch?" asked the visitor.

"No, Mr. Smithers, I ain't. I can't make up my mind whether to get a gasoline car or a limousine car. Maybe you can tell me—does limousine smell as bad as gasoline?" inquired the lady.

Two Is Company.

"Did you ever tell that young man that late hours were bad for one?" asked the father at the breakfast table.

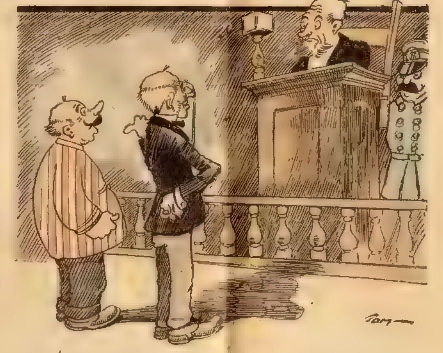
"Well, father," replied the wise daughter, "I told him they might be bad for one, but they're all right for two."

Grasping.

She—"Do you honestly believe it is [illegible] is as of the masculine sex?"

He—"Well, what more would you like to have now you women have got the earth?"

Mrs. Hilo—"When we went through the jail the warden wanted me to sing for the prisoners."
Mr. Hilo—"What did he want to punish them for?"



The Accuser—"It was this way, your honor. I went to sleep in that barber's chair and while I was asleep he defaced my whiskers."
The Accused—"He's got it wrong, your honor. I dewhiskered his face."

Honesty Pays.

Jim—"Honesty is ther best policy, arter al."

Bill—"How?"

"Remember that dog I stole?"

"Yep."

"Well, I tried two hull days to sell 'im, an' no one offered more'n a dollar. So I went, like a honest man, an' guv him to th' ole lady what owned 'im, an' she guv me five dollars."

Got a Job.

Artist (angrily)—"No, I don't want a model, I only paint flowers or fruit."

Model (smilingly)—"Oh, that's all right. Every one says I'm a peach."

'Tis False.

Miss Goodley—"Miss P[illegible] says she [illegible] her hair [illegible]."

Miss Knox—"[illegible] doesn't [illegible] at all. That's just a [illegible] she uses to throw people off the track."

Miss Goodley—"How do you mean? She has black hair——"

Miss Knox—"Yes, and she wants to give the impression that she couldn't have bought auburn just as easily."

ANNALS OF THE FARM.

"Our Bill we sent away to school"
Said Farmer Henry Hay,
"Because we wished to fit him out
For something that would pay.
We made him a physician and
He's working at the job—
And now I see that corn is worth
A dollar on the cob.

"Our John we also sent to town,
The dentist trade to learn;
Because our John was delicate,
Hard work he seemed to spurn.
We're proud of John, and his success
Caused mother's heart to flutter—
And eggs are high in price and we
Get forty cents for butter.

"And Mandy, too, we fitted out
And sent to business school.
We didn't want our girl to wed
A simple husband fool.
She's keeping books for some big firm
Up in the city now—
You see this twenty-dollar bill?
Today I sold a sow.

"Oh, yes, the prices that they pay
Are better now than then—
Why, just the other day I got
A dollar for a hen.
But, then, I am no better off
And times are very ill,
Because I must send all my cash,
To Mandy, John and Bill."

The Doctor—"Take one of these pills before and after meals."
Willie Po—"That's all right, doc; but where'll I get the meals?"

A Wife's Pleasant Day.

Husband (cheerily)—"Well, love, have you had a pleasant day?"

Wife—"Oh, splendid! After I dressed the children and got them off to school, I washed the dishes, made the beds, cooked [illegible] and answered some letters. I still had time enough [illegible] to darn my [illegible]."

Tact Demanded.

"A woman should take an interest in [illegible] interest her [illegible]."

"Yes," [illegible] Mrs. Torkins, "but [illegible]. If [illegible] loses it's a mistake to force him to talk about it and if it wins he'll tell without asking."

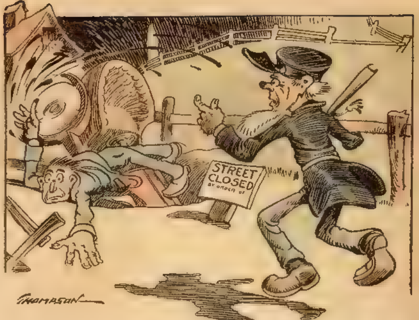
An Anxious Angler.

"Your [illegible] very impatient."

"[illegible]"

"What is the matter with him?"

"He [illegible] tired waiting for a [illegible] patiently hour after hour waiting for a fish to nibble at his bait."


STREET CLOSED BY ORDER OF

Town Constable—"Hi! I caught ye at last! Violatin' the law agin, were ye?"
Victim—"Naw, I wasn't! But I'll sue the city for damages. Your sign said this street was closed and I found it with this big opening in it."

A Great Artist.

Miss Shoddle—"Why, maw, just come to this side of the room and look at that portrait of paw that Dauber painted."

Mrs. Shoddle—"I see the face looks sort o' greasy. That shows what a great artist Mr. Dauber is. Your paw sot for that picture in August."

Might Be Worse.

Practical Father (angrily)—"I am told that that young man who comes to see you writes poetry."

Daughter—"Y-e-s, father, he does."

"Huh! Publishes it, too, I suppose?"

"No. No one will print it."

"Then there's some hope for him."

Where the Need Came In.

"Here's a doctor who says hundreds of appendixes have been removed needlessly."

"Of course, he's wrong. The removal wasn't needless as long as the doctors needed the money."

Quick Work.

The elevator in which the magazine editor was ascending dropped from the sixth floor, but the great man escaped serious injury. As he emerged from the wreck a friend stepped up to him and said: "Quick professional work, old man. You went through half a dozen stories in about as many seconds."

Easy to Support.

"Yes, my daughter is going to marry a poet."

"How can you bear to see your daughter marry a poet?"

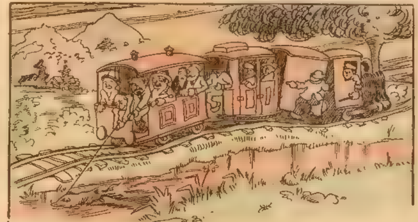
"Oh, a poet isn't so bad. He can wear my old clothes and he won't eat much."

An Easy Tumble.

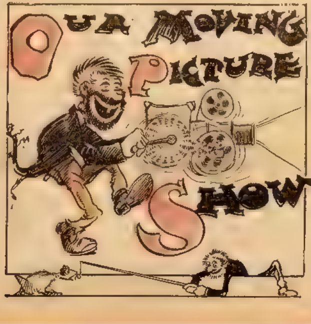
"My sister writes from abroad that her husband fell four stories out of a hotel window."

"Mercy! You take it very calmly."

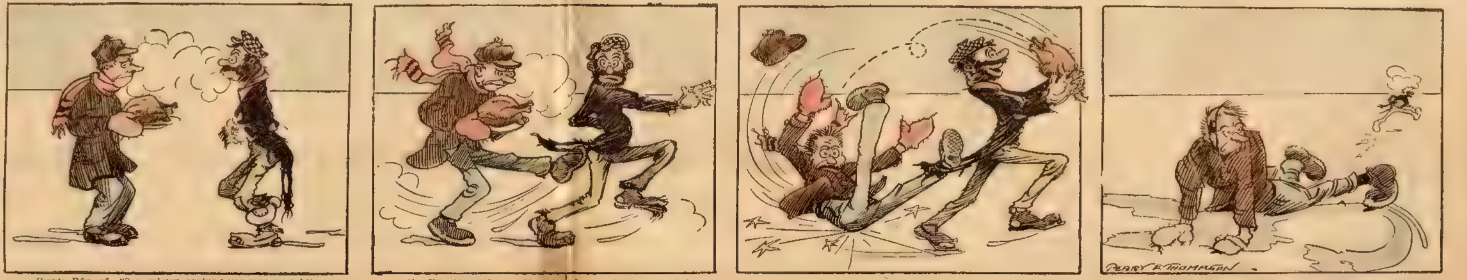
"Oh, he wasn't hurt. You see, it was in Venice, and he could swim."



Engineer (in Germany)—"What's the trouble? The train is going backward and I have full speed ahead!"
Conductor—"Oh, in that last car there's a fishing club on an excursion, and they've thrown a hook into that brook and caught a pike. And now they won't let it go."



EMPTY EDWARD'S GOOD LUCK.



Empty Edward—"Say, mister, couldn't yer give me a bite o dat roast chicken. I'm awful cold an' hungry."

Mr. Titephist—"Naw. Neighbor Jones gimme this bird to take home for myself! Take that, ye loafer, an——"

"Ouch! Consarn ye leggo my foot! He's runnin' away with me!"

"Blamed if that hobo didn't get the hull chicken and pretty nigh busted my back to boot!"

Christmas Shopping.

(Continued from page thirteen.)

buyers, what with so many being vegetarians, and as a result there isn't such a wild dive for the bargain counter until the week before Christmas. Then the Christmas shopping early gets in its stride and develops corns. Yes, indeedy! Most of us do our Christmas shopping early on the day before December 24th, or maybe as early as the 23rd. About this time the air becomes clogged with presents dropping in from the most unexpected persons. One flash at the return addresses on the packages sends icy blasts darting up and down the ankles.

Persons who were given the gate in the advance plans suddenly come to life with a shout. Late returns from counties never known to go Democratic cause an awful rush of buyers to the bank. Business of ripping the lining out of the savings account and throwing discretion to the winds. If our old friend Discretion has no parachute—good night!

With two mitts filled with Unc' Sam's very best shinplasters, the average voter cranks up, eases the starter over to the third speed and takes the curves in the high, doing a wasp line for the places where they part eleventh-hour persons from their dough.

Circling around the pylons with planes set for a bump, the purchaser spills his coin with the Australian crawl stroke, hooting the thousands of other belated simps who are yanking the store doors out by the roots and hurdling to the counters. The most inappropriate gifts at the highest prices are snagged off and hurled shrieking into the mail. Of course, they arrive late, while the express companies stake themselves to a pleased expression of indifference, as the avalanche gives way and carries them down.

The foolish, eleventh-hour persons find that while their lamps were not trimmed and burning, their money is, and they go staggering home under a pack of joy which represents months to gather and minutes to spend. They go shedding light, gladness, and presents, the latter along the street and in the cars. Not that the buyer cares if he can beat out the long throw home from left field, where the persons who were left out are.

For—get me, kid?—there's nothing to it. Christmas thoughts are fine and ausgespielt, but Christmas afterthoughts are the limit.

* * *

"I wonder why it is said that 'all the world loves a lover.'"

"I guess it's because the world thinks it's such fun to hear his letters read in court."

Alice Clement, Detective.

(Continued from page five.)

demn you. All your wife needs is a little of the petting and happiness that you once gave her before you tried to make a human machine of yourself. Now, you are in a stateroom that is arranged as for a bride and groom. Do you want to play the part, just for old time's sake? Or are you going to leave the train at the next station and make yourselves miserable for the rest of your life? I have had faith enough in you both to go to this expense, feeling that I would be reimbursed. But if am not"—I spread my hand—"I am game enough to lose on a case I had a lot of interest in!

"I stopped and looked at them. Long the surprise showed in their faces; they merely gazed at me out of wide eyes. Then, slowly, Brent Douglas turned and held forth his arms to his wife. She smiled at him. He clasped her to him, tightly and forever. That's about all of the story."

"No," I said as the hurry of the coach told me we were nearing Ravinia, "there's a little more. That night, a certain little woman I know went out to her apartment, took her kiddie on her knee and whispered to her that it is a whole lot better to create a little happiness in this world than to own a thousand fortunes as great as those of Croesus. Isn't that right?"

Miss Clement looked at me with twinkling eyes.

"How did you know?" she asked.

The next story in this remarkable series is called "A Woman's Wiles." It will appear in the Ledger next week. Don't permit any of them to get by you.

* * *

SLEEPING OUTDOORS.

This is the true story of the man who would sleep out of doors.

It was months ago that the man first began to talk about his project. "I'm tired of this effete custom of sleeping indoors," said he. "Here am I chained to a desk all day and sleeping under a roof all night. No wonder that I am a pale and haggard person."

"I shouldn't say haggard," put in his wife, timidly.

"Haggard I said and haggard I mean," answered the man fiercely. "More than that, I often feel very, very weak. I don't get enough air. None of us gets enough air. We are a degenerate lot. We are hopelessly vitiated in mind and body."

"What are you going to do about it?" asked his wife.

"I am going to build a house with sleeping porches; that's what I am going to do," answered the man. "I am going to build sleeping porches with a house attached. The really important thing will be porches, on those I will live; on those I will sleep; the house itself will be a secondary consideration altogether."

And he was as good as his word. He secured a lot and an architect to draw plans for the house, and he dwelt with such insistence upon the fact that the sleeping porches must be roomy and the sleeping porches must be bright, that when the blueprints came home they looked all porches.

The plans were approved and the building went on. Every day or so the man made a trip to the country to see—the sleeping porches. He passed through hallways and livingroom, library and den unseeingly; he paid no attention to the detail of windows and none to the pantries. All that he did was to feast his eyes on the porches and calculate where the bed should be placed and how early the sun would shine in his eyes.

"I will probably put on ten or fifteen pounds of flesh in a month," he told his wife.

"I'm afraid you are going to find it cold at first," remarked that lady.

"Cold!" roared the man. "Cold! That's what I want to find it. I intend to have fresh air, whether it is cold or warm. This thing of sleeping in steam-heated apartments has already wrecked me."

In the course of time the house was finished, sleeping porches and all, and though the thermometer stood at zero the family moved because the man did not wish to be kept away from his porch another minute. "I must get to open-air sleeping as soon as possible," he said, feverishly.

And as for his wife, she just pursed her lips and gave no advice, but she saw that three pairs of blankets were put on the man's bed and that some warm woolen pajamas were hung near by.

That night the man pulled his cot bed through the double doors of his bedroom onto the sleeping porch and said "goodnight" patronizingly to his wife.

"In the morning," said he, "I will come in fresh, rosy, and rejuvenated, while you will arise tired and uninvigorated."

"Leave the double doors open; I am sure I shall get plenty of air through them," replied his spouse, calmly, and went to sleep. She was awakened after what seemed to her a marvelously short time by a very, very curious noise.

"Burglars," said she to herself, womanlike. She listened again and added, "Though I never heard any which sounded like that."

As a matter of fact, the sound that she heard at first was that of chattering teeth. Some one's two sets of molars and incisors were knocking together in a way that imperiled their safety.

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Corn, says Dr. Hutchison, a noted English authority, is one of the ideal foods.

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"The Memory Lingers"

Sold by grocers—
Packages 10 and 15 cts.

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Battle Creek, Mich.

"John, is that you?" she asked.

"Yes-s-s," answered that gentleman.

"What is the matter, dear?"

But John did not reply this time. He was too busy dragging his bed through the double doors. Once it was in, he closed the doors with some force.

"Are there any more blankets in the house?" he inquired hoarsely. "And how do people get the pneumonia? Does it come with a pain in the head?"

So the wife arose and procured another pair of blankets and spread them over the recumbent form of her better-half and added a woolly bathrobe to the pile.

The next morning the man declared that he had not slept a wink.

"Don't tell me that you are going to give up sleeping on the porch!" exclaimed his wife.

"Certainly not; I shall never give up that custom," answered the man of the house with dignity.

So that night he superintended the making of a Klondike bed for himself. Now, a Klondike bed is made by pinning the blankets into the form of an envelope, so that the occupant must work himself into it from the top, with a sort of angleworm twist. The man arrayed himself in a full suit of woolen underwear, woolen pajamas, woolen stockings and a cap. Then he wormed himself into bed, and asked to be handed his hot-water bottle and to be wheeled to his porch. By the exertion of his wife and a maid these instruments were carried out.

Two hours later his wife was awakened by something which sounded like the bones as played by the end man in a minstrel show. It was her husband's teeth chattering again.

"Is there any more bed covering in this house?" he demanded fiercely.

"None," replied his wife. Then she had a brilliant thought. "There's a pair of portieres that might help," she said.

"Bring the portieres!" commanded the man, as he dragged his bed into the room.

So she brought the portieres and put them over him and refilled the hot-water bottle and shut the double doors, and finally went back to bed herself and to sleep.

The next night the man surveyed his Klondike bed with a certain disfavor.

"Get in and I will wheel you out!" said his wife.

The man looked embarrassed. "Fact is I don't believe I'm going out," said he. "Fact is I think I will not sleep out until June. June's early enough to go out."

* * *

An Unwitting Lie.

A young lady was doing her best to encourage a male "friend" who had called repeatedly and seemed interested in her.

"Did you know," he asked, "that I passed your house last evening?"

"Of course I did!" she answered. "Do you think I shouldn't know your step?"

But the young man grew very quiet, for he had passed in a cab.

To Overworked Women

Are you one of the great army of women who thru force of circumstances have had to do more than your rightful share of work? In your weakened condition you have almost lost all hope of ever enjoying that health and strength that should be yours.

Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription

No Alcohol — No Narcotics

For over forty years has been recommended for just such cases as yours. Thousands of women have benefited by it.

You, too, will find it a good, honest, square deal Restorative Tonic and Strength-giving Nervine and Regulator—compounded and carefully adapted to act in harmony with woman's peculiar, delicate and ever sensitive organism. It makes weak women strong, sick women well. For over 40 years it has given satisfaction in its liquid form. Now it can also be obtained in tablet form—from dealers in medicine—or send 50 one-cent stamps for a trial box to Dr. Pierce's Invalids Hotel, Buffalo, N. Y.

Dr. Pierce's Common Sense Medical Adviser, in Plain English; or, Medicine Simplified, 1008 pages, over 500 illustrations, newly revised up-to-date Edition, cloth-bound, sent for 31 one-cent stamps, to cover cost of wrapping and mailing only. Address: Dr. R. V. Pierce, Buffalo, N. Y.

One of Many

Mrs. G. H. Williams, of Lynnhaven, Va., writes: "It is six years since my health gave way. I had female trouble and all the doctors (I employed three) said I would die. I was not able to do my work, had to have someone all the time. Finally, I read in the papers about Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription, and decided to try it. I had not taken but one bottle until I found it had done me good. I took in all, five bottles of 'Favorite Prescription' and two of 'Golden Medical Discovery' and now I am able to do all my housework, and have gained fourteen pounds. I advise all women who suffer from female trouble to try your 'Favorite Prescription.' It's the only medicine on earth."

ANECDOTES OF PEOPLE

No Use for Water.

"In the days of the old volunteer fire department, there was more quenching of thirst than quenching of conflagrations," said Fire Chief Kenlon of New York.

"The volunteer firemen, I'm afraid, were a sad lot of roysterers. There's a story they tell about a fire back in '69.

"It was a fire at an outlying farm, and when the firemen arrived with engine and hose, the buildings were pretty well destroyed.

"The farmer met them at the gate. He said bitterly:

"'No use yer comin' in,' boys. There hain't a drop o' water within two miles of us.'

"But the firemen, mindful of the usual merrymaking that accompanied every fire, pushed right on with their apparatus.

"'Oh, that's all right,' they said heartily. We don't mind drinking it straight.'"

❦

Two Thrusts.

Congressman Henry was deprecating in Washington an international "mariage de convenance."

"Two men were talking about this marriage cynically but truthfully," he said. "The first man remarked:

"'Of course the Earl won't be able to support Miss Lotta Golde in the style she's been accustomed to.'

"'Oh,' said the other, 'her father will make allowances for that.'

Congressman Henry gave a grim laugh and resumed:

"The first man looked thoughtful for a moment. Then he said:

"'Despite the stories about the Earl's past, it does seem to me that he's Miss Golde's devoted slave.'

"'Oh, yes,' was the other man's reply, he's eager for the bonds, all right'"

Let Me Remove Your GOITRE
$2.50 FREE Trial Treatment

Don't worry any longer about that ugly goitre. Let me send you $2.50 worth of my wonderful treatment FREE. No matter what other doctors or remedies you have tried, don't be discouraged. My treatment is different from all others—will prove its value to you [illegible] in the privacy of your own home. You will be surprised at how quickly it reduces the size of your goitre, relieves choking and other distressing symptoms. My treatment is usually effective from the first trial. There is nothing like it for [illegible] results. [illegible] took our treatment. [illegible] Free $2.50 Treatment [illegible] You risk nothing. Address DR. W. T. BOBO, Goitre Specialist, 612 Minty Block, Battle Creek, Mich.

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A beautiful resort situated on the Gulf Coast, [illegible] south of Jacksonville. [illegible] to spend the winter [illegible] the finest fishing and hunting in Florida. Hotel [illegible] remodeled and renovated and [illegible]. [illegible] moderate rates. This is considered one of the finest resorts in Florida. For further information address RAY PAYNE, Manager, 31 Pine St., New York, until December 15, then to Punta Gorda, Florida.

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Blood and Nerve Tablets FREE
A. RADKE, 1157 Madison St., Milwaukee, Wis.

A Soldier's Training.

Colonel Gilford Hurry, commissary of the National Guard, of New York, was condemning an officer who, at an annual encampment, had fussed too much over his men.

"A famous editor," he said, "watched this officer one night during the last encampment, as he showed the boys how to fold their clothes, how to spread their bedding, how to wrap themselves in their blankets, how to drape their mosquito netting, and so forth, and finally, when the officer took leave, the editor called after him:

"'Hey, you've forgotten something.'

"'What have I forgotten?'

"'You haven't heard 'em say their prayers and kissed 'em all good night.'"

❦

A Military Expedient.

Mrs. Langtry, discussing dress in New York, said. "I used to wonder why the great Paris houses—Callot Soeurs and Paquin, Paul Poiret and Beer—had no branches in the States. But I inquired in Paris, and they told me the reason.

"A dress designer, they said, must live in the very center of things—in other words, he must live in Paris—for, anywhere else, he loses touch—he doesn't know what is fashionable and what isn't. So that is why these firms have no branches here.

"Successful designing isn't easy," Mrs Langtry resumed, "though it is true that some second-rate dressmakers regard it as the Colonel regarded hair-cutting.

"A regiment was short a barber. The Colonel asked if there was a gardener among his troops. It appeared that there was, and a gardener duly presented himself at headquarters.

"'I appoint you, sir,' the Colonel said, 'as regimental barber.'

"'But Colonel——' the man protested.

"The Colonel, however, interrupted him fiercely.

"'Nonsense, sir, no buts!' he roared. 'If you can cut grass, you can cut hair.'"

❦

Didn't Believe in It.

"Did I ever tell you," asks Ervin Nelson, of the Cleveland Leader, "how my youngest boy baptized his cat? No! It was like this:

"Walter's playmate was the son of a Baptist preacher. The 'kid' had seen a few baptizing exercises and was anxious to imitate them. So the children caught the family cat and endeavored to practice the deep-sea method of immersion with the aid of a washtub. The cat couldn't have been sincere in her desire to lead a better life—she scratched and squealed until the boy had to let her go. Then the boy next door hollered:

"'Dog-gone you! Go on and be an Episcopal cat if you want to!'"

❦

Not His Lead.

Here is another of the stories told by the late Senator Robert L. Taylor and published by his close friend, John Trotwood Moore:

An old-time darky was closing his sermon one night in Paradise Alley, and Uncle Rastus, who had been playing cards the night before, was seated in the amen corner sound asleep, dreaming of his favorite game. The old preacher said:

"We will now close dis meetin' wid pray'r, an' we will ax Bre'r Rastus to lead."

Uncle Rastus suddenly roused himself from his slumber and shouted:

"It ain't my lead! I jest dealt!"

❦

Could Read.

A catalogue of farming implements sent out by the manufacturer finally found its way to a distant mountain village where it was evidently welcomed with interest. The firm received a carefully written, if somewhat clumsily expressed, letter from a Southern "cracker" asking further particulars about one of the listed articles.

To this, in the usual course of business, was sent a typewritten answer. Almost by return mail came a reply:

"You fellows need not think you are so all-fired smart, and you need not print your letters to me. I can read writing.

❦

An Annoying Doorbell.

A Chicago family which employs as its butler an old-fashioned negro was constantly annoyed by the doorbell of the house getting out of order. On several occasions an electrician, who used some sort of white powder in his work, had been called in to fix the bell.

One evening, when there were guests, one of them complained of a sore throat. The mistress of the house summoned the butler and said:

"Sam, go to the drug store and get a small bottle of Dobell's solution."

"Befo' de Lawd!" exclaimed the negro, in genuine distress; "is dat do' bell out ob odah ag'in?"

❦

A Narrow View-Point

Adolphus Busch, the millionaire brewer, was indicating in Pasadena the road to success.

"Do more than your employer requires of you," he said. "There's the simple signpost pointing successward.

"I speak in general terms. It is narrow to speak from your own view-point alone—from the oil view-point if you're a Rockefeller, the steel view-point if you're a Carnegie, and so on.

"To speak in that narrow way of success is futile—it is like the way the inanimate objects spoke in the old fairy tale.

"'The secret of success,' the stamp said, 'is sticking to it.'

"'To succeed,' said the knife, 'be bright and sharp.'

"'Keep up to date,' said the calendar.

"'Aspire to greater things,' said the nutmeg.

"'Don't knock—it's old-fashioned,' said the electric bell.

"'Do a driving business,' said the hammer. And the barrel added:

"'Never lose your head.'

"'Make light of everything,' the fire observed, cynically.

"'But always keep cool,' said the ice."

❦

A Barometer.

Gen. Daniel E. Sickles, despite his financial troubles, continues to tell innumerable witty war stories. One of the most recent of these concerns a captain in a South American war.

"This captain"—so General Sickles tells the tale—"was continually getting sick and being reported unfit for duty whenever there was a big battle in sight.

"After he had shirked about seven battles by means of sick leave, he became notorious; and it is said that he once overheard, from the hospital tent, two newsboys talking about himself.

"'Juan,' said the first boy, 'we'd better order an extra supply of papers. There's going to be some tall fighting tomorrow.'

"'How do you know that?' Pepo, the second boy, asked.

"'Captain Blanc,' was the reply, 'is sick again.'"

❦

A Financier's Expedient.

"If the high-cost of living keeps on, the rich themselves will feel the pinch of it."

The speaker was Brand Whitlock, Mayor of Toledo. He continued:

"I know a Toledo banker who has already begun to retrench. His daughter said to him the other day:

"'Father, dear, I need a new riding habit.'

"'Can't afford it,' the banker growled.

"'But, father, what am I going to do without a riding habit?'

"'Get the walking habit.'"

❦

Little Left.

He had taken her to an expensive restaurant. The young lady had ordered more things than the young man had ever heard of.

"Waiter!"

"Yessir?"

"Check, please."

The waiter buzzed forward.

"Will you have anything else?" he asked.

"What else have you?" demanded the young man.

And the waiter, for once in his life, was stumped

❦

A Narrow, Sad Future.

Senator LaFollette pointed out, in an interview in Madison, the restricted future that confronts the young man of today, thanks to the trusts.

"Barred out of everything by these all-powerful combinations," he said, "the young man of today is in as pathetic a position as the young seal that asked its mother:

"'Mamma, when I grow up, what do you think I'll be—a sacque, a hat, a muff, or a box of humble car-tabs?'"

❦

Instructions by the Court.

William Rutherford Watts, a tariff expert of Kansas City, said in a recent address:

"The average tariff argument is amusing in its ignorance. It reminds me of a certain Kansas City police court.

"A policeman rose in this court to testify against a prisoner.

"'Wot's this here feller charged with?' the magistrate demanded.

"'Bigotry, Judge,' the policeman answered. 'He's got three wives.'

"'Three!' cried the magistrate. 'Why, you ignoramus, that ain't bigotry. That's trigonometry!'"

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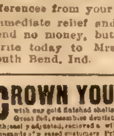

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All I ask is that you show you mean business. Just do this. Fill out the coupon and send me **$2.75 for Four Full Quarts** of grand, mellow, Opodeldock Whiskey and I will send an **extra bottle all prepaid,** or send **$5.50 for Eight Full Quarts** and I will send a whole extra **quart free, all prepaid. These prices are only on first order.** If you do not say that this is the best Whiskey you ever drank, if you are not delighted—tickled to death with your bargain, after tasting this fine Whiskey, send back the Whiskey at my expense and I will promptly refund your money. Keep the extra bottle for your trouble. What offer could be fairer? You never drank such good Whiskey as Opodeldock—this is my way of acquainting you with it. Fill out the coupon now.

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N[illegible]

A[illegible]

Chicago Ledger

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The Ledger employs no traveling agents to solicit subscriptions, and every person working in that capacity is a fraud. No person is authorized to take subscriptions for the Ledger unless he or she be well known in the city or village where they have been appointed agents to sell this paper every week. A liberal reward will be paid for evidence that will enable us to arrest and convict such persons as are now traveling from town to town in different sections of this country, claiming to be agents of the Ledger and thereby defrauding the people. Beware of strangers

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Advertising rate $2.25 per Agate Line, per insertion for advertisements in the The Chicago Ledger and The Saturday Blade combined. These two weeklies have an average circulation of

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GENTLE JABS.

Pleasures of youth are a misfit in old age.

Easiest habits to overcome are the good ones.

Faith in your own ability is two-thirds of the battle.

The way to get a reputation for goodness is to be good.

A woman's idea of a crank is a man who doesn't like her.

It's well enough to hope, but don't loaf on the job while doing it.

No matter how good a cigar may be it is sure to meet its match.

One way to avoid spending money foolishly is to not have any.

Even a wise man never gets over being a fool to a certain extent.

A man may express opinions in his wife's presence—but what's the use?

Retribution is something we are morally certain will overtake other people.

Most men boast of what they are going to do, but few boast about what they have done.

As a civilization booster the bathtub has done more for humanity than all the guns ever made.

The average man is seldom willing to compromise until he discovers that he is putting up a losing fight.

Contentment may be better than riches, but give the average man riches and he will promise to be content.

His Satanic majesty hasn't much use for a man who spends his time in trying to earn an honest living for his family.

It always surprises a girl more or less when a man tells her that he loves her—just as if she didn't know it all the time.

When a woman ceases to ask her husband if he loves her, it's a sign that she no longer cares whether he does or not.

A widow is never more dangerous than when she tells an old bachelor that she was never really happy in her married life.

A woman writer says a kiss on the forehead denotes reverence. Perhaps she is right, but the average girl doesn't care for that brand of reverence.

Probably the serpent told Eve that eating the apple would be just as good for the complexion as any of the advertised preparations, and less expensive.

There is an old bachelor who advocates sending all bigamists to lunatic asylums on the grounds that any man wanting more than one wife is hopelessly insane.

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HIGHEST cash paid weekly with part expenses. Our new plan a winner. Outfit Free. Best selling time now. Write Hawks Nursery Co., Wauwatosa, Wis.

AGENTS—New Fibre Home Broom. Costs same as good Broom. Outlasts four. Sold only by agents. Guaranteed. Hilker Mop Co., 1239 Grand Ave., Chicago.

MEN-Women, All Towns, Sell Mentholo by leaving with each family on trial, every trial means sale, profit $3 to $4 daily, credit given, sample free. Leighton Supply, Pittsburg, Pa

AGENTS Wanted—Men and women to sell our "Sanitary" Brushes; household necessity; sells at sight; double your money on every sale. Send for samples. Banner Brush Co., 7428 Lowe Ave., Chicago.

MEN and Women to sell our song hits. Earn big money. Postal gets particulars. Dep't M, Old Dominion Music Co., Alexandria, Va.

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* * *

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A committee had the State Senator on the carpet.

"Didn't you promise, if we elected you, to get our county good roads?"

"Why, certainly, gentlemen."

"Did you do it?"

"No. You see, airships are getting very common now. I thought we'd better wait a few years. Maybe we won't need any roads at all then. Fine weather for corn, isn't it?"

* * *

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"Mr. Southpaw," inquired the shoe clerk boarder, "how is your wing?"

"Pretty good," answered the baseball boarder.

"Wouldn't injure it to exert it a trifle?"

"I think not."

"Then, will you please pass the butter?"

* * *

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The Captive Goddess.

(Continued from page twelve.)

"I must speak to the point. You know who leads the other party. It is Gareau. He has with him a crew of French voyageurs, all of whom are devoted to him. Do you know who else is there?"

"I don't know them. One is some sort of a white girl."

"Gareau is all Northwester. She is the daughter of a man of the H. B. C.!"

"Then she is in devilish bad company!" retorted Lane, gruffly.

"She is, but she does not know it. She has been tricked. She thinks she is with Hudson Bay men. Lane, this is your chance to help her and help yourself. Will you aid to rescue her?"

"Does she want to be rescued?"

"A day back I should have said, no; for she was still blinded by their deceit. Now, I think her eyes are opened, for Ronald MacQuail has appeared on the scene, and even the children of the H. B. C. know that MacQuail is all Northwester."

"What does David Reith know?" demanded Lane, sharply.

The visitor was briefly silent, and Lane did not wait.

"You see," he added, "I know you better than you think. I once or twice met you; you called yourself Jean Huot. I happen to know your real name is Reith. Ay, and a stout Northwester you are, too. Does Gareau pay you extra for sending you here to trick me?"

"Lane, I am glad you do know my real name. Is it not enough to tell you that Jean Huot is a cover for something more than pulling at an oar, hauling at a tracking-line or packing around a carry?"

"It is not enough. If you can explain, I will weigh what you say.

"For Heaven's sake, be reasonable, Lane! If you know that I have been serving under a false name, you are shrewd enough to see that there is something in it. What it all means I can't tell, but I ask you to help that young woman who has been tricked by Gareau."

"Tell me who she is."

"Naomi, daughter of Angus Osborn."

"Ha!"

"You see the situation. Lane, here is chance for you to win your way back to favor with the H. B. C."

"I have been practically outlawed by the Governor."

"Through the advice of two chief traders?"

"Yes."

"Angus Osborn is a factor, and highly esteemed. Suppose you save his daughter? Why, man, you will have a friend second to none but the Governor, himself."

Lane had lost his belligerent manner, but he remained cautious. He asked more questions about Reith, and about the Goddess and her chief captor, and he was answered with sufficient clearness to satisfy him. Then Reith added:

"Give your help to us, Lane, and it will help you. Remember, your slip was not a bad one."

"Drunkenness!" exclaimed Lane, bitterly. "That's what they say. Listen, Reith! I am a big man, but liquor affects me greatly. One drink is all I can take with safety. And since I lost Fort Chamberlond for the Northwesters I have never taken a drop unless there seemed to be great need. This spring I lost that boat and cargo for the H. B. C. because having labored hard in icy waters that drenched me and set my blood to an icy pitch, I drank too much. A drinking man I never was. Blame me as much as they will [illegible] man can deny the truth of what I say."

"What are you doing up this way?" asked David.

"I started to meet Roswell, the factor at Craywood, on his return trip from the Saskatchewan. My boat I borrowed from my friend, Creile, the trader at Norn, and my men are those who lost employment with me. We all got drunk; we were all sent adrift from the H. B. C. I wanted to see Roswell and ask for his help. Maybe we have acted childishly in dogging Gareau, but I was curious, and I hated him."

"You wanted Roswell's help. Well, Angus Lindale Osborn is more influential than even Roswell. Save Osborn's daughter, and he will save you!"

"Reith, there's my hand on it. I'll do my best!"

"Good! Now for the ways and means."

"Shall we attack at once?"

"If possible, but I fear some of Gareau's men will be already astir. Come with me!"

They went, but, as had been anticipated, the time was not auspicious. Vager and Chalifoux, selected to prepare breakfast, had improved a lull in the storm to go about their task.

Reith and Lane consulted further, and various contingencies were provided for, and a code of signals arranged. This being finished, they separated, and Reith returned to his own camp. It was none too soon, for presently Gareau came to survey his picket line. David received a compliment on his alertness, and Pau was found pacing lightly about, but wholly unconscious of what his fellow picket had been about.

The day passed without events of importance. Toward night the sky grew clearer, and it was plain that the storm had spent its force. Winnipeg still rolled and pitched, and there could be no boating until its waters grew calmer. Again darkness settled heavily on Isle Boisee.

"Derge and Pau will have the first watch," suddenly announced Gareau.

He said no more, and nobody questioned him, but David was impressed by two facts. First, he had radically ignored the order of the previous night watches; secondly, having put his two most trusted men on post first of all, he said nothing about subsequent pickets.

Later, when the men began seeking their blankets, and Derg and Pau prepared for duty, David took two half-consumed brands from the fire and made a brief pretense of thrusting them against one of the other men. This caused only a laugh in camp, but it meant more elsewhere. If Lane had kept his promise, he or one of his men, advanced from his position, was surveying Gareau's camp, and the act was a signal that said, "I suspect that you will be attacked tonight!" For so David interpreted Gareau's course as to sentries. And Lane's course, in such a crisis, had been carefully mapped out.

Gareau soon lay down and the place became quiet, but those who fell asleep did not have a full night of rest. It was about twelve o'clock when the captain came to the voyageurs' quarters.

"You are wanted!" he announced. "All out!"

Every man but Lorrison and Jeremiah was soon with the assembled group.

"Now, my hearties!" said the captain, in low tones, "we will get lively. Isaac Lane's party is a pest to us! there isn't room for both bands on this island, and, as he has been dogging us with his H. B. C. knaves, I may say there isn't room on earth for us and them. Eh, comrades?"

Derg and Pau returned a quick affirmative, suggesting that they knew what was afoot, and other voices were raised with alacrity.

"Good!" commented Gareau. "Now, lads, we are going to attack them. They are asleep; the surprise will be complete, and we can do as we please. Voyageurs, what do Hudson Bay men deserve?"

"This!" quoth Derg, thrusting forward his rifle; and the echo was again prompt.

"Again, good!" cried Gareau. "Now, we must have a guard here, and a strong one. With the advantage of surprise with us, we don't need all our force, and I dare not leave camp without defenders. Findley, Huot and Chalifoux will stay."

Findley hurriedly demurred, and David was wise enough to join Chalifoux as an echo, but Gareau had chosen his men as he wanted them. Findley, the eldest of the three, was put in charge, and the others prepared to go. Weapons duly seen to, the remaining seven men started with Gareau, MacQuail, and Vallel at their head. All disappeared among the trees.

"Parbleu!" growled young Chalifoux. "Ferd don't think we can fight! Vraiment! I will fight even him if he says I am not equal to his best. Bah! are we but children, comrades?"

He had no answer. David knew him to be quick-tempered and jealous, and, while unwilling to venture food for the flames, he did not try to still this passion.

"Are we women?" snapped Chalifoux "Are we children—hein?"

"Oh, it is nothing," responded Findley, laughing. "Somebody had to stay. Still I would like chance to shoot a few of that H. B. C. gang!"

"I hope they will be awake and give Ferd his fill!" went on the young voyageur, still in passion. "Bah! Ferd is a pig, a squaw! He took Jacques Roussin, who is no older than I. Voila! I will fight Jacques at the drop of the hat. I am no child!"

Luc Chalifoux intended to say more but he was checked. David, welcoming this outburst, had been looking sharply into the shadows, and, having seen something there, he had given a signal.

Now, while his two companions stood inattentive to duty, something leaped panther-like on Jules Findley's back and bore him to the ground. Another something had essayed to do the like to Chalifoux, but that man was too quick. He leaped back, seeing strangers in camp, and would have been free to work his will had not David tripped him.

Another moment and the two men were held down by numbers and Reith and Isaac Lane stood erect, masters of the camp.

"All is well!" quoth Lane, laughing "We have outwitted them."

John Lorrison, who had been totally forgotten, came running in haste.

"Look out!" he cried. "Beware of the Indian women!"

David wheeled just in time to see Life Hand running toward him knife in hand and evidently bent on stabbing him in the back, but others there had been alert Two of Lane's voyageurs seized and disarmed her, and soon she, as well as

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Findley and Chalifoux, was securely bound.

The victory was complete, as far as it went. Lane had been alert and when he saw the two brands waved by David as a signal he had posted his men as best suited him. Gareau's party had passed them by in the darkness, and then they had flung themselves on the guardians of the camp.

Life Hand and Findley were philosophical in their trouble, but Chalifoux raved and struggled with his bonds.

"Luc," said David, soothingly, "if you see fit to cast your lot with those who think you can fight—as Gareau does not, you know—you can have a good place with this party and be sure of reward."

"Traitor!" snarled the voyageur, bitterly. "Do you think I am like you? Shall I go back on Ferd Gareau and the Northwesters? Not I! I will die, first. Long live Gareau and the Northwesters!"

Reith smiled and let the matter rest. He was not surprised, for he never had put much faith in Lu's late anger. But that outbreak had caused a diversion that had made victory all the quicker and easier.

One of Lane's men who had been outposted came hurrying in to announce that trampling in the woods indicated the return of their foes.

David caught up a rifle. "Come with me, Luc!" he directed.

They hastened to meet Gareau's party.

CHAPTER XVII.

WINNERS AND LOSERS.

Gareau, tramping back from a fruitless visit to the other campfire, had a great surprise as he neared his own quarters.

"Halt!" was the sharp command. "If you value life stay away from here. This place has been captured and taken from you. Loaded rifles bear upon you, and if you force us to it, we fire!"

"What's all this?" demanded Gareau, startled.

"The men you seek are not over north, but right here. This camp is ours. Accept your defeat gracefully, for it means death to molest us. Keep away!"

It was an order that did not fall agreeably on the captain's ears. He had much to say. At first, he doubted; then he comprehended and fell into a rage, storming wildly. If threats could have helped him he would soon have regained lost ground, but his fury was impotent.

It was long before he accepted the inevitable, and this happened only after a consultation with Ronald MacQuoid, but these men were not fools, and this was not the first setback they had met with during the war between the rival fur companies. This helped them to understand that they were, for the time, baffled and helpless. Then they fell back, and the strange condition was presented of swapped camps. Each party hovered over the ground held by its enemies.

Reith and Lane were wary. Knowing that Gareau might at any moment rush his opponents, they kept pickets out and guarded against surprise as best they could. After a time, leaving Lane at the front, Reith returned to mid camp. He found the Goddess in earnest conversation with Lorrison, and when the latter called to him he joined them.

"I have told everything!" announced the broken man, simply.

"Yes," added the girl, "and Mr. Reith, I know of your brave work in our behalf. I know, too, that you are devoted to the Hudson Bay Company, for which I am very glad. I do not forget that it was you who saved my life when I was flung from the boat. Sir, I am very grateful to you!"

She held out her hand and David took it and bent low. Before, she had seen that his intelligence of face and his language made him seem wholly unlike his mixed-blood companions, but, now, she was surprised at his manners. Bred as he had been among persons of education and refinement, he replied to her without embarrassment, and with ease and skill befitting a high station in life.

"But," she added, a little later, "I do not understand—who and what you are!"

"A servant of the H. B. C.," he replied, smiling.

"But no ordinary voyageur."

"Frankly, I have had other work mapped out for me by the Company."

"I understand, in part. Sir, can we go back to the quarters of the Company at once?"

"As soon as we can get away from here."

"I am sure I am greatly needed there. You shall hear my story in detail presently, but, for now, let me say briefly, that things of great importance have come to my knowledge. A vast plot of the Northwesters has been formed, seeking to wrest away not only the H. B. C. posts in this part of the land, but those along the Columbia. I learned this by mere chance, and from that moment I thirsted to give my information. Warned, the Company was secure, but, without warning, their long line of posts would go down. Then I was grossly deceived. Sir James Bestlang, whom I thought a loyal Company man, advised my instant start for the Saskatchewan, claiming that I must meet my father and Factor Wynne."

"Wynne is far to the east," interrupted Reith.

"Oh! I was tricked, lied to!" she cried, her eyes flashing. "You perceive, now, why I undertook this journey. I thought it was to aid the Company, but, with my eyes open, I can see that they intended I should not tell my discovery. Oh! it was a treacherous plot! And Gareau made me go veiled for a distance. He said it was so that no Northwester would recognize me. I know now it was to keep Company men from seeing me. And I was led to think him a Company man! Sir James Bestlang shall answer for this!"

"So he shall!" agreed Reith, sturdily.

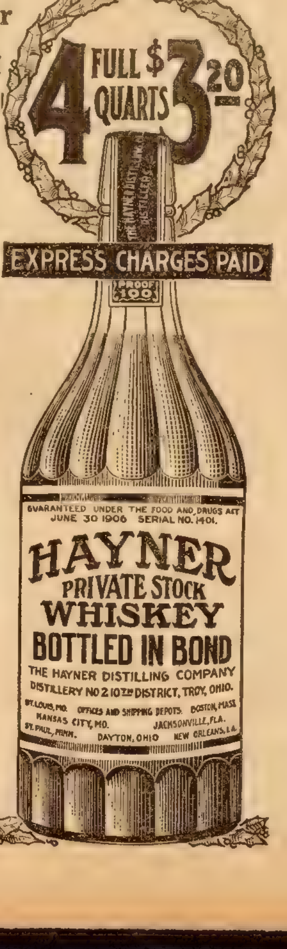
"He is a traitor to the Company. My father will see him, and then——"

She stopped, nodded, and did not finish her sentence in words.

Reith was silent. A great question was in his mind. After Gareau had lured her away far enough, what would have been done with her? The problem could not be answered.

"Permit me a word here," interrupted John Lorrison, removing his hat with his usual politeness. "I burn to clear myself of charges. You, Mr. Reith, have heard what Gareau said about me. My true name is Alexander MacNord, and I am the unworthy uncle of this young lady. Her mother was my sister. I had money once, and lived with a great measure of comfort, going to New York, London, Paris, and other cities. That is not material, however. Long ago my sister died. Angus Lindale Osborn and I were never close friends, but chiefly because our tastes were so different. I was a man of books and society; he was a man of the fur-trade, and he gave attention to little else. The time came when speculation was much talked of. I invested in it, and when Osborn asked me if the officers of the enterprise were trustworthy, I, trustful myself, but really knowing nothing of practical business, told him yes. We both invested; we both lost heavily. Osborn upbraided me bitterly, and we ceased to be even casual acquaintances."

Lorrison paused in his recital, passe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his hand wearily over his forehead, sighed, and then resumed:

"For many years I have not seen him, nor did I see my dear niece, here, until we so strangely met on this trip. You will understand from this statement why I did not recognize her, especially as I heard her addressed as Mademoiselle Prefontaine."

The girl gently pressed the fluttering hand he held before him.

"This is explanatory," he went on, "but not what I most wish to say. Gareau has accused me of being a pirate. Sir, when I was about forty-five years old I was seized by the black-flag captain, Michaels, and forcibly kept three months aboard his vessel, the Beating Wing. I had owned a small craft of my own, and voyaged on larger ones, and really had maritime knowledge. Learning this, Michaels compelled me to act as his second mate. I did it to save my life, and escaped at the first opportunity.

"About the same time a half-grown boy, whom I knew only as Patches, joined us, not as an impressed seaman, but because he hunted for us and longed for the life. That was Gareau. Thus, it is true that he and I were together under the black flag, but I swear that I harmed no man during that wretched affair, and shared in no plunder. That is my defense, and a true statement."

"No right-minded person, sir, can doubt it," replied Reith, readily.

"As for my presence here," Lorrison concluded, "I have told the truth before. Matters have not gone well with me, financially, and I thought to seek the Pacific coast and—" he hesitated, flushed, and then added with trembling voice—"and try to labor there for my bread. But it is finished; I know my utter unfitness for business, and I have seen enough of wild life. As soon as possible I shall return to Montreal and, once there, either live or starve!"

"I shall be there!" cried the Goddess. "Yes, and you are my uncle, and you shall never want while I live!"

"I thank you, dear child!"

Lorrison said the words with his usual gentleness and grace of utterance, but there was no light of relief in his eyes. Estranged as he had been from her father, his pride would never permit him to accept money earned by Angus Lindale Osborn.

The dawn of another day found everything quiet around the camp. Its new occupants made the most of things and felt themselves far better off than their rivals. They had Gareau's food and minor possessions, as well as his boat. Gareau had their supplies, but Lane had sunk his boat in a quiet cove, and it was not certain that it could be found by the Northwesters.

With sentinels still outposted, Reith and Lane held a long consultation. They wanted to arrange for the future, and most of all, to retrace the steps taken in the last few days. With a cloudless sky and no more than a gentle breeze, they would be ready to embark as soon as the angry lake subsided, but there might be danger in doing it. As soon as they left land they would be open to the rifle-fire of their foes.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AT THE END.

The day wore on and there was no sign of the enemy, but this quiet raised the suspicions of Reith and Lane rather than stilled them. Ferdinand Gareau was not the man to drop an enterprise meekly and his chief opponent grew thoughtful.

"They contemplate a trick!" Reith finally declared. "At a pinch we could risk ourselves on the water, even now. They will never give us a chance to start in darkness. There is a trick afoot!"

After some talk with Lane work was begun. The boat was carried nearer the water and made ready for immediate departure. It could not be floated then, but this would take little time when such a step was desired.

Next, Reith selected two voyageurs who were skilful bushrangers to help him, and they set out to solve the supposed mystery. Half an hour later all three hastened into camp.

"We have the explanation!" David exclaimed to Lane. "Gareau and his men are making their way to the other end of the island, by means of skulking along the bushes that fringe the shore. They think that if they can take us in the rear, and rush this camp, we shall be surprised and fall easy victims."

"What is your plan?" asked Lane, calmly.

"First, gag our prisoners, and do it quickly. Then it is afloat for us. I think our boat will live."

Life Hand, Findley, and Chalifoux were speedily fixed so they could sound no alarm, and then, leaving them, the Hudson Bay men rushed to the water. The boat was launched, and all hands tumbled in hurriedly. Less expert men would have met with an upset, but, with Lane at the steering-oar, the voyageurs proved their skill finely. Catching the water just right, they kept a tolerably level keel, and the blades began to cut the waves.

Reith looked back anxiously. It was possible that not all of the enemy were where they were supposed to be, and possible that a shot might come from the nearer, more northerly bushes with deadly effect. Lustily the boatmen pulled at their oars, and the craft receded from shore. Spurning the throttling rollers,

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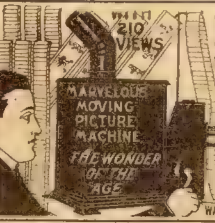

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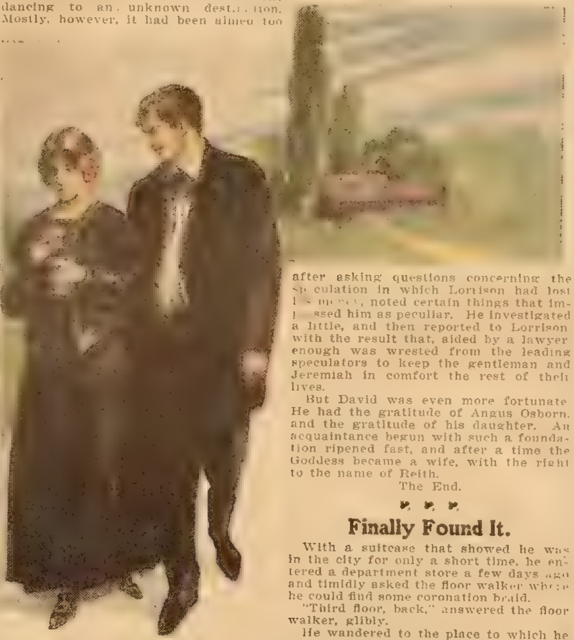
their bows drove on toward safety, and hope took on a lease of life.

Reith had all his attention on the shore, and there was soon something to reward his energy. The Northwesters had appeared at the south. It was no time to hide danger, and his voice rang out sharply.

"They are going to fire! Down, mademoiselle! Down, Lorrison! Shelter yourselves."

The girl cast a look astern and then bent slightly, her manner that of [illegible] disdaining bullets, but Lorrison sat erect and gazed like a stoic. It was to be suspected that he would have welcomed a fatal shot if it made him the target.

Now came the expected discharge. Bullets began to patter around the fugitives. Twice the water was cut barely outside the gunwale, after which the lead went dancing to an unknown destination. Mostly, however, it had been aimed too high and merely sang a wild melody above their heads. There could be no safety while it lasted, and Lorrison, beset with a sudden recollection, put out his hand and pressed heavily upon his niece's shoulder. He would have her shun the peril she coveted.



An acquaintance which ripened fast.

Lane had been glancing shoreward with a scowling face. "We must send back the kind they give us!" he declared. "Why, not, Reith?"

"We are not a war-party," David returned, "and must subordinate our zeal to the good of our non-combatants. To fire would be to lose way, and mademoiselle must be taken where bullets cannot reach."

"Mademoiselle is no child to hide or run!" cried the girl, with spirit. "If you obey me, lay on your oars and give them all the battle they desire!"

"No, no!" said Reith, evenly. "Bend your backs, my voyageurs, and put us far off."

"I'll have one shot if I die for it!" declared Lane, stubbornly. "My target is selected. Here, Lorrison, lay hold in my place and keep the boat steady. I am no novice with the gun, and I'll be sworn I can do that which will save us from long trouble on the homeward trip. No, I will not be denied. Lay hold!"

Relieved, he stood up and flung the gun to his shoulder. He fired with surprising quickness, and his men cheered as they saw the result. Gareau had reeled and fallen.

"The end!" quoth the marksman, coolly. "Even when they find my boat they will lack heart without their captain. Do you demur, Reith?"

David looked at the Goddess and received a composed smile.

"Success is the test of a good action," he admitted. "Of course, I am not sorry to have Gareau laid low. Danger from bullets is past. Now, we have only to go home by the way we have come. Lively, voyageurs!"

* * * * *

A week later there was hasty action on the part of the Hudson Bay Company. A plot had been discovered by which the Northwesters were to surprise and capture the Company posts from the East to the Columbia, and there remained time to frustrate it. Also, the news went forth that the revelation that prevented it had been made by Angus Lindale Osborn's daughter, and that David Reith shared the glory with her.

David's career as a secret agent was past, and James MacNash wisely abandoned his own connection with that line. If the Northwesters were baffled in their scheme, they still held their power. Reith was made a chief trader by the H. B. C., and Isaac Lane, forgiven for his slips, continued as a boat captain.

It was ultimately known that Gareau, MacQuail, Life Hand, and the Northwest voyageurs escaped from Isle Boisee! Gareau had a wound which kept him in idleness for some months, but he finally recovered fully. The soon-following consolidation of the fur companies played queer pranks with men and matters, and, in later years, many Northwesters served the chartered company, but Gareau never. He had sailed for France.

Lorrison did not meet with such misfortune as he expected. David Reith, after asking questions concerning the speculation in which Lorrison had lost his money, noted certain things that impressed him as peculiar. He investigated a little, and then reported to Lorrison with the result that, aided by a lawyer enough was wrested from the leading speculators to keep the gentleman and Jeremiah in comfort the rest of their lives.

But David was even more fortunate. He had the gratitude of Angus Osborn, and the gratitude of his daughter. An acquaintance begun with such a foundation ripened fast, and after a time the Goddess became a wife, with the right to the name of Reith.

The End.

* * *

Finally Found It.

With a suitcase that showed he was in the city for only a short time, he entered a department store a few days ago and timidly asked the floor walker where he could find some coronation braid.

"Third floor, back," answered the floor walker, glibly.

He wandered to the place to which he had been directed, and on rounding a display case, found himself in the midst of more detached human hair than he had ever seen before. He was bewildered for a few seconds, then remembered that the floor walker must have known whereof he spoke, and replying to a question from a young salesgirl with a lot of blonde hair, he timidly told her what he wanted.

In less than two minutes he was again bewildered by an avalanche of artificial hair goods—puffs, coronets, switches and a lot of other things he had never heard of.

"Do any of these please you?" asked the salesgirl.

"No, that isn't what I want," he replied.

"Did you bring a sample, or can you describe the color, or the shade you wish?"

"What I want is pink," he replied, "and I didn't bring a sample."

"I should think you didn't if it was pink," replied the salesgirl. "Are you sure you are in the right place?"

"I'm sure I'm not," he answered, feebly. "I told the man I wanted coronation braid and he sent me here."

The salesgirl explained that the floor walker evidently thought he said coronet braid and told him to go to the next floor down to the northwest corner. He followed instructions and found himself in a maze of hand and machine worked shirtwaist patterns, which soon surrounded him in another avalanche.

"None of these looks like what I want," he protested. "What I want has to be used in a needle."

Just then an attache of the shop whose business it is to see to it that customers are properly cared for came along. He listened, then took him gently by the arm, and led him to a counter where material for fancy needlework was sold. A few minutes later the customer emerged smiling, with the coronation braid in a pocket.

* * *

HER WAY.

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  Skirts so skimpy, tight and fast.
Think how every one would stare!—
  Yet, before a month had passed,
Doris, in one yard of hem,
  Hobbled with the best of them.

Doris now is full of scorn
  For the skirt that's "on the boom."
Says it never will be worn—
  So, I think, we may assume
Very shortly will be seen
  Doris in a crinoline.

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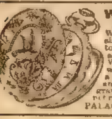

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Our Boys' Corner

Ken Warren, Boy Scout

Or, ADVENTURES IN ALASKA

By William Ressman Andrews

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CHAPTER VI.

IN ALASKAN SILENCES.

HUGH was thrown off his guard by Ken's manner. From the moment they had entered the hut his leader's concern had seemed to disappear. If he had only known what was going on in his friend's mind—and what young Warren had seen over the edge of Monte's bunk! Imagining that Ken had moderated his opinion of Monte, Hugh's fears were set to rest. Not many minutes after turning in he was sleeping as soundly as Job or Mr. Whipple. But not Ken. He never was so thoroughly awake in his life—though he breathed louder than the rest, and had appeared to go to sleep before anybody.

And he was thinking faster than he imagined he was capable of. His bunk was the top one opposite Monte's. Ken had his automatic in his hand, ready for instant use. If need be he would cut the fellow down in his tracks, as the man had intended to do to him a little while before—and probably had decided to do before the night was over. But the lad wanted to avoid bloodshed—only as a last resort would he fire.

Presently Whipple got ready for bed. Ken could not see, but judging from the sounds, he knew that Whipple had placed his money belt on the table. And before getting into his sleeping bag he failed to carry it with him, evidently taking it for granted that he was among friends and that its contents were safe.

This looked easier for Monte, and he felt that it would lighten his labors, so to speak. He had planned, also, to murder not only Ken, out of revenge for saving Whipple's life on the river bank, but the rest of the boys, as he felt certain that they wore money belts worth taking. Indeed, he was right in this supposition. All three carried quite a sum apiece to pay the expenses of a journey in a land of high prices. Why he suddenly decided not to knife Whipple now that the man's money was so near his grasp will never be known.

Ken felt that the only way for him to get proof strong enough to convince Whipple of his misplaced trust was to make Monte halt at the table the moment he put the money belt on his person. Then he would wake Whipple. But what if Monte decided to thrust his knife in the boys first?

Ken heard the fellow climb down from his bunk with the stealthiness of a cat. The man's feet touched the floor lightly. Then there was silence. Ken wondered if Monte was going to the table, or was he noiselessly creeping up to his bunk? This suspense lasted only a few seconds in reality, though to the young man straining his ears for the villain's next move, it seemed almost hours.

Creak, creak! At last Monte was moving again. Ken was able to locate the man's movements this time with accuracy. Monte had decided to make sure of the money belt so near his reach. A slight scraping sound, as the fellow's hand moved it unexpectedly, came to his ears. Monte stopped, wondering if any one heard the noise. But the heavy breathing continued. They were all fast asleep, except the alert watcher in the top bunk, who snored louder than any one else!

Ken wanted to give the thief time to conceal the belt on his person before making him throw up his hands. The evidence had to be sure to convince Whipple. The young patrol leader counted the seconds.

"Hands up, or you're a dead man!"

Ken's voice rang out sharply. In the small cabin its huge volume reverberated from side to side with tremendous force. The effect on the sleepers was startling. They fairly bounded up in the air, but none was able to get to the floor right away as he was encased in a sleeping bag tied tightly around the neck. Ken, of course, had made it appear on retiring as if he had got into his, but in reality he lay unencumbered by it, and was ready to jump to the floor at a second's warning.

His command was answered by a pistol shot, the bullet splintering the woodwork close to his head. Monte had fired at random, as he had purposely let the fire die down in the stove to make the interior dark enough for his evil plans.

"Take that!" cried Monte, as he pulled the trigger a second time. But the bullet failed to reach its intended mark.

Ken opened fire, hoping to wound his assailant before he turned his pistol on the sleepers imprisoned in their bags. His action was the means of saving their lives. Monte, seeing that his treachery was discovered, and having resolved to carry out his scheme at any cost, meant as a last resort to shoot everybody, if prevented from using the quieter method of the knife.

With the bullets coming dangerously near his head, he now thought only of escape. Already he had left the door unbolted. A bound brought him to that side of the cabin, and he flung it open. Then turning quickly he slammed the door shut.

It would have been foolhardy to rush right out. Monte, as Ken suspected, stood with raised pistol to put a bullet into the first head thrust through the opening. Strategy had to be used to get the murderous sentinel away from his advantageous position.

"What's the matter?" cried Whipple, excitedly, getting out of his bag and reaching for a match.

"Don't strike a light!" cautioned Ken, suddenly remembering a place that would serve Monte's purpose almost as well as the door. "We'll get shot at from the window!"

The ale bottles could have been dislodged easily with a stick, giving Monte free range of the inside of the cabin.

By this time Hugh and Job were out of their sleeping bags, and waiting with their pistols for orders from Ken. He whispered all to come close to the table.

"My money belt!" said Whipple, hoarsely, his hand feeling the top and discovering his loss. "I thought we were safe from robbers in this place, Monte!"

Whipple had not been able to distinguish the figure of the man who had dashed out of the room, and supposed Monte was still among them. Job was as much in ignorance of what had happened.

"Your money belt will be brought back soon. Monte's gone after the robber," Job cried. He supposed that some thief had been discovered by Monte, and that he had gone in pursuit of the intruder.

The suppositions of Job and Whipple had surprised Ken into a stunned silence. But it lasted only a few seconds. On recovering from his astonishment, he quickly disabused their minds of their false notions.

"Monte's the thief," he told them.

"What!" went up a general shout.

The lad hastily explained, and then cautioned against going to the door.

"He thinks he has us like rats in a trap, and can kill us one at a time as we stick our heads outside."

"But won't he try to get away? The dogs are harnessed to the sleds," said Hugh, reminding his leader of what they had seen in the lean-to.

"That's what he is hoping we'll think," said Ken. "Indeed, it's quite a natural supposition—that a man caught in an attempted robbery should think of immediate escape. But he intends to kill us before he goes."

"What's to be done?" they asked of the young leader.

"One of us must crawl through the window, creep up behind while he is watching the door, and get the drop on him."

"Let me go——" Hugh broke in, but

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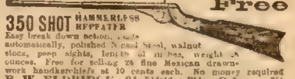
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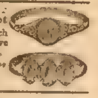
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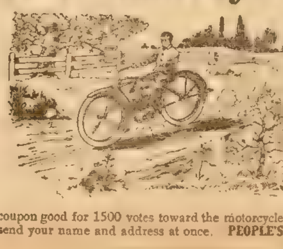
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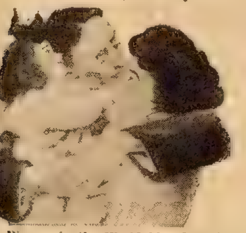

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Ken cut him short with the remark: "I'm going myself. As leader of the Bear Patrol, it is my place to be in the post of danger."

The others protested, each wanting to do something, but Ken's desire prevailed. Whipple particularly wanted to get after the man who had completely hoodwinked him and planned to murder him. Ken briefly told him his suspicions of Monte from their first awakening, and the man was so chagrined at the deception practiced upon him, he was angry enough to rush out of the cabin regardless of the certainty of being shot down the moment he was seen by the rascal he wanted to catch

"Well, what's the plan?" asked Hugh, in a low tone

Before answering, Ken tiptoed to the cabin door and listened. There was no sign of the watch, but the lad had an instinctive feeling that he was waiting, pistol in hand, to carry out his original purpose. Monte, on the other hand, was becoming suspicious of the delay and silence. He thought it strange that at least one had not attempted to overtake him. Still he had the upper hand. But he felt that he would not have it for long. Evidently the inmates were planning some secret move to circumvent him. His thoughts went to the outfit in the lean-to. Yet he feared flight without first making away with his intended victims. He wanted to destroy every witness to his theft. Now that they realized that he was a scoundrel they would not rest without finding out more about himself—and that he wanted to prevent. Everything seemed to point to his remaining until he had killed them. But a fear began to seize his heart. What did they intend to do now that they appeared to know his intention of staying at the door to shoot them in their tracks the moment he got sight of them?

He thought of the window, as Ken had But he dared not go out of sight around the corner to look at it an instant. There was a chance of one of them waiting for him to leave his post in order to dart out of the door. Once there ceased to be an ambush, he could not expect to hold them at his mercy. Still, while he stayed, one of them might be climbing out of the window. Monte knew that whoever it was, the person would dash to the woods, circle the clearing till in a line behind him, when it would be easy to get the drop on him.

"Ten thousand devils!" he muttered to himself, "but I've made a mess of this and got myself in a pretty fix."

It is said that murderers when caught spend their time regretting that they have not committed their crimes differently to prevent detection. It was this way with Monte after he realized that his trap had proved a snare for himself as long as he remained.

"Why didn't I croak 'em in their sleep before taking the money belt?" he regretted. "It must have made a noise and wakened that Ken Warren." He failed to realize that the scout leader had been awake and was watching his movements.

Finally Monte was unable any longer to stand the fear of their capturing him instead. His only desire now was to get the dogs on the trail before they should realize that he had gone.

He glided to the lean-to. A noise on the window side of the cabin made him halt. He heard a couple of ale bottles tumble on the snow as Ken poked them out of the square hole in the logs. Monte thought he saw his chance. He crept up to fire a shot into the opening, hoping to hit some one with a random shot. For a moment, though, he hesitated. Was this, a ruse to get him away from the door? Uncertain as to the real motive he stepped back toward the cabin entrance. But a noise brought him back again. Then yet another time he wavered and not waiting to investigate the sound, he decided on a move to safety.

He ran tiptoe to the lean-to and led out his team. Now he dared not disturb the dogs of the Boy Scouts for fear of their raising an alarm. He had originally intended to lead them behind his own outfit. But now secrecy was everything. A low command to his dogs was sufficient for them to obey without uttering the faintest whine or bark. Hastily he brought them forth Then he carefully took them to the lane leading to the main trail.

Everything was now ready for a quick departure But something held him back. He wanted a chance to get a shot at Ken if possible. He went to the window to see if, after all, some one was really trying to get out that way. As he got close he saw a black object. By coming nearer and peering at the window he saw what appeared to be the hat of a person wriggling through the opening

"I've got you!" hissed Monte, as he lifted his pistol and fired

"[illegible]" came the exasperating laugh of Ken

Monte had shot at the lad's cap put on the end of his rifle to draw the enemy's fire.

The next moment Monte heard the hinges of the door creak. He knew then that he had been tricked, as he suspected he might be. He realized that the others were piling out to get in the open with weapons they would not hesitate to use the moment he was sighted.

Over the ground he went in leaps and bounds toward his waiting team. As the night was dark, he was able to get in the sled and start off before Hugh, Job, Whipple, and Ken—who had decided on the hat trick at the last moment instead of crawling out of the window at once—realized that he had disappeared with the team.

The Boy Scouts and Whipple scoured the clearing and the woods close by Then when they could not find Monte they came back to the cabin puzzled, until Ken decided to investigate the lean-to. Then it was discovered that Monte had left with his team

But there was still another disconcerting discovery. Monte had cut the harness of the lad's outfit. It would take hours to repair it. Meanwhile the fugitive would be miles away—perhaps too far to ever be overtaken.

The smoky rays of the cabin lantern showed very glum faces. Whipple almost felt that his money was gone beyond recovery. Hugh and Job thought that something had happened to Ken's father resulting in his having sold the mine to Monte. Ken was oppressed with the feeling that his father might have met with foul play. There seemed no other accounting for his parent's strange silence and Monte's apparent possession of title deeds to the mine. This urged him to running down the man who had just robbed one of their number and planned to kill all while they slept.

Whipple too, was anxious to see Mr Monte again. He not only wanted to recover his money, but he was so incensed at the imposition that he felt it would be great satisfaction to help put the man behind the bars

"Come, boys, let's get busy with this harness. Won't be long before we're right behind the gentleman's trail. Must let him see that we like his company too well to stay away from him very long," he said grimly.

"Quite my sentiments, Mr. Whipple said Ken

"Right you are," declared the other two lads. "You certainly can depend on us scouts to see this through to the finish"

They brought the harness in from the lean-to and patiently set to work repairing it. The break of day saw them still at the task. They were anxious to make a start, but realized painfully that, after all, they had not gained any headway

Everybody had to go to sleep from sheer exhaustion. The labors on the trail the day before had been strenuous, and then they had missed the necessary rest of the evening. It was very discouraging, but one cannot travel in that climate without plenty of food and repose

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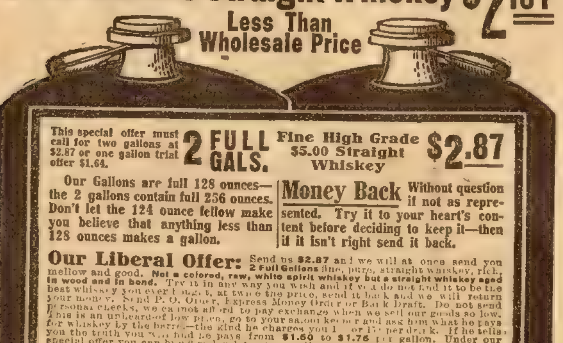

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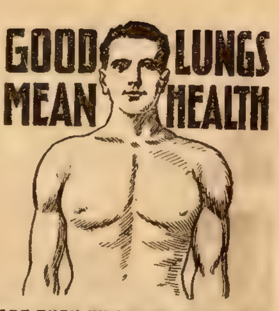

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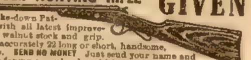

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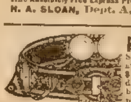

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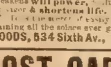

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CHAPTER VII.

FINDING HIS FATHER.

After breakfast the little company hastily got ready to continue their journey. Monte had gone in the direction of Ten-Mile Creek, evidently feeling it was not safe to go back to Dawson. Within a couple of miles of Ten-Mile the man's trail was lost in numerous other tracks intermingling at this point.

"Oh, we'll never see him again!" said Hugh, with a lump in his throat.

Ken had all he could do to keep from showing his disappointment. With several hours' start, and having at last struck a trail traveled by so many that his tracks were lost it did not seem as if Monte had been able to get away for good.

Presently a miners' settlement was sighted in the distance. It was the first sign of life seen on the journey from the grewsome cabin. Ken felt somewhat cheered, as though he was about to learn something definite about his father. The others thought so, too. But they were doomed to disappointment. A miner looked out of the cabin door of the first place to which they came.

"Howdy," he greeted, in friendly tones. He invited them to stop. Ken shortly made known his desire for information. The miner thought a moment.

"Yes," he said at last, "I remember your pop—knew him well. His claim was right over there," and he pointed to a cabin on the brow of a hill, a stone's throw to his right.

"It was his claim?" repeated Ken, apprehensively. "Isn't it his any more?"

"No; said to belong to a man by the name of Monte."

The lads exchanged glances of alarm. Mr. Whipple snorted in surprise.

"Tell us what you know—quick!" he urged.

The miner saw that there was something wrong.

"Over a year ago, as far as I can remember, Mr. Warren fell in with this man Monte one day while in Dawson. Said he was in hard luck and wanted to get work. Your father brought him back, fed and clothed him, and then gave him a job."

"But the sale of the mine?" asked Ken. "And where's father now?"

The miner shook his head.

"Nobody knows," he answered, solemnly. "One day Monte takes a long trip—is gone a week. When he shows up he tells your pop that he has discovered a rich deposit. He got your dad interested and promised to take him to it on the condition that he wouldn't reveal its location to a soul."

Ken nodded understandingly. He knew that the discoverer of a new section rich in minerals always tried to keep it secret to prevent a stampede before he and his friends had located the choicest claims.

"They started off one day. Two weeks later Monte came back alone. Said your father intended to remain and develop the property. Wouldn't tell where it was, though. Finally Monte showed papers to the rest around here, and said they were deeds to Mr. Warren's mine in Ten-Mile. Said your father found his new claim so much richer he had decided to sell the old one."

"Didn't that sound fishy?" asked Whipple.

"It did and it didn't," replied the miner, slowly. "You know in places like this people have so much to do to look after their own affairs they don't think much about their neighbors, unless something looks mighty suspicious. Monte made his story plausible, and everybody took it on faith. But from what you have told me about him, I see that he probably lied—and—and——"

He hesitated, for he had not the heart to tell the son that it seemed as if his father had been murdered.

"I know what you m-e-a-n——" stammered Ken, overpowered by the horrible supposition. But it would not do for him to give way to his feelings. He needed all his strength and will power to run down Monte.

After further questioning, Ken asked the miner to lead the way to his father's cabin. Here the lad made a discovery which cheered him up and made him feel that his father might still be alive. He found in a tin box, buried in the earthen floor of the cabin, the original deeds to the mine.

"The documents Monte has are forgeries, I'm sure," exclaimed the scout leader. "Otherwise, these would have been in the scoundrel's possession. This is a secret cache that has escaped his prying eyes."

Then the lad expressed his hopeful view about his father. But the others took it dubiously.

"I don't want to discourage you," said the miner, "but I don't think so, after all this time has elapsed. Your father would have shown up before now, if he could."

"What's given you hope?" asked Whipple.

"The discovery of these original papers. Looks as if Monte is holding father a prisoner to get his signature, transferring the property."

"But Monte wanted to sell me the mine," said Whipple. "He must have felt sure of the papers he had."

"He pretended to want to sell," said Ken; "but that was just a trick to get hands on your ready cash."

"I hope you are right," said Whipple, "and Mr. Warren will turn up alive.

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We mean to prove superiority in the whiskey business; we mean to prove at our expense, by giving a free test bottle, that Fels 3-Star Whiskey has no equal. Our quart bottles are full 32-ounce quarts and not short quarts and we guarantee every statement we make and back them with our paid up capital of $400,000.00. If you want real whiskey and not weak watery concoctions, send us your remittance on our free test proposition. The taste is the test, that will prove more than we can write. Address orders and letters and make remittances payable to **A. Fels, Mgr.,** or

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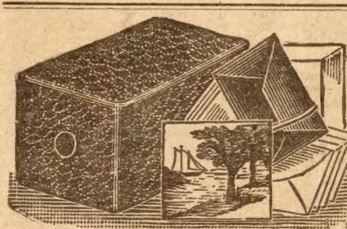

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To advertise our business, make new friends and introduce our catalogue of Elgin Watches we will send this elegant watch by mail post paid for **ONLY 98 CENTS.** Gentleman's size, full nickel silver plated case, Arabic dial, lever escapement, stem wind and stem set, a perfect timekeeper and fully guaranteed for 5 years. Send this adv. to us with 98c, and watch will be sent by return mail postpaid. Satisfaction guaranteed or money refunded. Send 98c today. Address

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The "BEST" LIGHT
MAKES AND BURNS ITS OWN GAS
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from your kerosene (coal oil) lamps and lanterns than from electricity or gas. Our great WHITE FLAME BURNER fits any common lamp and gives a soft white light equal to three ordinary lamps. NO MANTLE TO BREAK. Nothing to get out of order. Safe and Reliable. Delights every user.
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But all these months and nothing heard of the missing man," he murmured to himself.

An examination of the claim showed that it had been worked in the short summer season when the ground thawed out. Piles of ore were scattered about waiting for the spring washing.

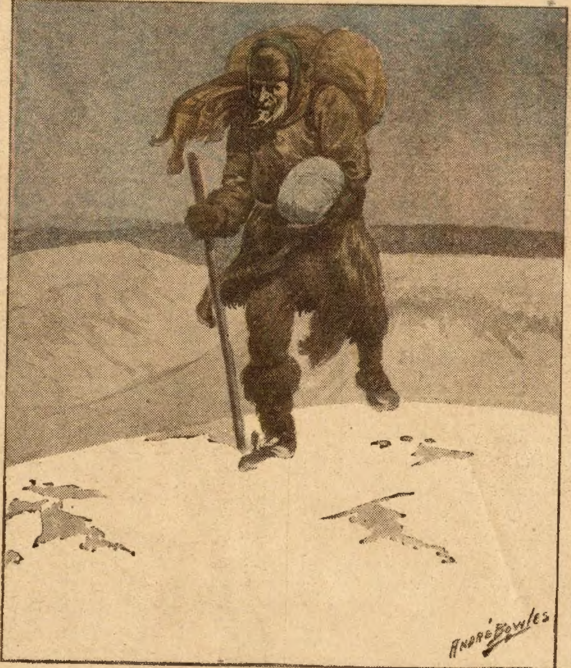
"When were these taken out?" asked Ken.

"Last year," replied the miner.

Then he recalled Monte's irregular appearance in Ten-Mile. He would sometimes stay for weeks working the mine; then he would be gone for months. This explanation of the man's habits made Ken think that he was right about his father being held a prisoner somewhere.

There was no use saying any more to the others about his hopeful supposition. He saw that they were convinced of an opposite belief. But if his parent were imprisoned, where was he, and how was the lad going to effect a release? It was a hard question to answer for one so young. It would have puzzled an older head.

The three lads and Whipple remained at the Warren claim for a week after this when an extraordinary thing happened. During this time they had searched everywhere for clews, and had plied every traveler with questions. But no one answering the description of Monte had been seen. The man had disappeared as completely as Ken's father. The miners of the community had aided him in seeking signs of the man whom they felt convinced, after hearing Ken's story from start to finish, was their erstwhile fellow gold digger.



They saw a tall man dressed in ragged furs.

There was quite a little to do at the mine in the way of settling up the affairs of his father, which had been left in an uncertain state. It had been decided that with this finished, the three lads and Whipple would each take an outfit and independently scour the country for a radius of several hundred miles, to get on track of Monte. Ken was of the opinion that the rascal would not leave the Klondike region. He expected that they would get tired of looking for him. Then he would come back to Dawson and try to fleece other strangers. The party intended to return to Dawson and purchase separate outfits. It was decided that Whipple would watch in town for Monte, while the lads carried out their part of the plan.

Everybody was ready to leave the Warren cabin. The miners of the place were gathered around to say good-by. Just as Ken got one foot on the sled, he noticed a man walking toward the group from up the trail. His gaze rested upon the man with peculiar interest, and the others, seeing his attitude, turned and looked at the object exciting his curiosity. For an instant they all thought of Monte, and wondered how he dare come back so boldly when he might know that some one would be on the lookout for him, even if the boys had decided to make a short stay.

They saw a tall man dressed in ragged furs, a pack on his back, a staff in his hand. He appeared to be footsore and weary. A long, unkempt beard hid the lower part of his face. There was no pick nor shovel in his outfit—just the staff—quite unusual in the case of miners going prospecting. This was winter, the time when all mining activity ceased, prospecting or working of the claims, to be sure; but the staff was out of place, unless the traveler were ill and had cut a sapling as a support to help him get to the nearest refuge.

The stranger evidently needed the staff for that purpose. He leaned on it with the air of one who was weak and had suffered much. As he got nearer it was noticed that his face was haggard and his eyes sunk back in his head. Hardships, terrible suffering, physical and mental, were as apparent on his face as though the words denoting these qualities were written across his brow in large letters.

There was something familiar about his looks as the man came closer. They all thought they had seen him before, but he had changed so that they all imagined that it was an illusion.

Presently he stopped and gazed around in a dazed way. His eyes fell on Ken, and his hand flew to his head.

"My God!" he cried in a piteous voice, broken with emotion. "Am I going mad at last, after all I've suffered, that I see visions."

Ken started at the sound. He came forward and peered into the man's face.

"Great heavens, it's father!" he shouted, running forward and clasping the ragged figure in his arms. "It's no vision. Here I am, your son Ken."

The man looked at him with agonizing intentness. "Yes, I see it's no dream. You're here in the flesh."

The next instant he fell into a heap on the snow. Mr. Warren was seriously ill and needed the services of a doctor. He was put on the sled and hurried to the hospital in Dawson, where he lay on a cot six weeks, unconscious with brain fever.

When he was recovered sufficiently to talk, he told what had happened. Monte had enticed him into the mountains, under the pretext of having found a rich outcropping of gold. Once they were camping alone on the trail, he was made a prisoner and carried to a deserted cabin. Here Monte had kept him a prisoner, offering as the price for freedom his signature on a set of forged deeds, which Monte had made out when he could not find nor compel Mr. Warren to disclose their hiding-place. Finally, when it was evident that the prisoner intended to refuse all demands, Monte decided to kill him. He struck Mr. Warren over the head with a bludgeon. But before he could bring the weapon down again, a noise outside frightened the murderous captor. He rushed out of the cabin and peered into the night to see if travelers were coming their way. Before he could determine what had made the sound, it had been necessary to go a long way from the cabin. Meantime, Mr. Warren recovered, from the blow, which had been a glancing one, only slightly stunning him. He realized that in a few minutes Monte would be back to finish his terrible deed. By a heroic effort the bonds were wrenched loose. The desperation of utter despair had given

LIFE SIZE DOLL AND TWO BABY DOLLS 25c

We want to send you this beautiful golden haired doll. She is nearly 2½ ft. tall, and just the sweetest doll you ever saw. Let me tell you more about this charming little lady. She cannot be broken, has cheeks like two pink roses, and big brown eyes, and lips that look as if they wanted to be kissed, she will make you love her as soon as you see her.

She is so big and fat that you will have to put her to bed in your own crib and dress her in your own outgrown clothes or some of the baby's. With a real child's dress on and a red bow that can't be lost or come untied in her bright curls, you will have a baby that all your little friends will admire, and you will love her better than your other dolls, because she is the kind that won't break, lose her eyes or snarl her hair.

This doll is stamped in beautiful colors on strong cloth, and mamma can sew her up on the machine in ten minutes. The printed directions will tell her how to make Miss Dolly, she will allow you to place her in all kinds of natural positions. She has on bright red stockings and laced shoes that will not wear out or grow shabby. She is the kind of doll your grandma used to play with, only the stuffed doll of her day had no pretty face like a little live girl. Her eyes, nose, and mouth (and hair if she had any) were made with ink or burnt match.

Besides the life size doll we will also send you these two baby dolls which look just like their mamma. These dolls cannot be broken by the smallest child. Now we know you want these dolls and we want you to have them. If you will send us 25c we will send you all three of these beautiful dolls, all charges prepaid. No delay in filling your order. Address
THE SMITH CO., Dep't A, Skowhegan, Me.

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Does it Flutter, Palpitate or Skip Beats? Have you Shortness of Breath, Tenderness, Numbness or Pain in left side, Dizziness, Fainting Spells, Spots before eyes, Sudden Starting in sleep, Nervousness, Nightmare, Hungry or Weak Spells, Oppressed Feeling in chest, Choking Sensation in throat, Painful to lie on left side, Cold Hands or Feet, Difficult Breathing, Dropsy, Swelling of feet or ankles, or Neuralgia around heart? If you have one or more of the above symptoms, don't fail to use Dr. Kinsman's Guaranteed Heart Tablets. Not a secret or "patent" medicine. It is said that one out of every four has a weak or diseased heart. Three-fourths of these do not know it, and hundreds have died after wrongfully treating themselves for the Stomach, Lungs, Kidneys or Nerves. Don't drop dead when Dr. Kinsman's Heart Tablets are within your reach. 1000 endorsements furnished.

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Send 10c to pay postage, packing and advertising. Any initial engraved Free. Ring sent same day money is received. Dept. 85, THE AUCTION, Attleboro, Mass.

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IMPERIAL MFG. CO., Dept. 67, Parsons, Kans.

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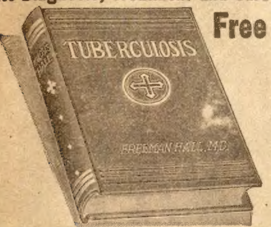

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Protects your neck and chest, leaves no room for snow or rain to get down your collar. Fits any size neck and always looks well. The wool is knitted in such a way it just fits under your coat collar around your neck and buttons snugly up to your neck. The ends are made just long enough to hang down under your coat and to thoroughly protect the chest against the dangers of colds, pneumonia, croup, etc.

All you need to do to put it on is to place it around the neck, cross it over, and button the snap button. Nothing easier—no pins or clasps to scratch your neck or fingers—nothing to tear or rip. Once put on it stays on—and in place too. They come in two colors—snow white and maroon red. The picture shows it on a man, but women and children wear them just as much. In fact, pa, ma and the children like them equally well.

How to Get the Muffler FREE!

In the first place do it right away, for they are mighty neat and dainty and the demand is big, but the stock is limited. This dandy knitted muffler, in either white or red, will be given for a limited time free, all charges prepaid by us, to any one who fills out the coupon below and sends it to us with one dollar for a year's subscription to the **Chicago Ledger.** We treat old and new subscribers alike on this magnificent offer—if you are already a subscriber send the dollar and we will extend your subscription a year from the time it now expires. **Some people are renewing for two or three years so they can get them for other members of the family, for they are great—believe us.**

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him strength equal to that of two men.

He looked around for a weapon, but there was none. Monte had a rifle and two pistols. The bludgeon was no protection against such an armament. The only thing was flight. So out into the night the poor man rushed off as fast as he could. As it was summer time there was no danger of being tracked by footprints in the snow. But he must keep away from the trails to avoid Monte. In doing this Mr. Warren got lost. He was without food or means of procuring it, and, for all he knew, hundreds of miles from any one but the man seeking his life. He could not remember how long he wandered aimlessly in the wilderness, haunted by the fear of being overtaken and killed while he was powerless to defend himself.

He fell down unconscious. When he awoke he looked into the faces of three Eskimos. They took him to their camp. The tribe was on its way to the Banks of Bearing Land, above the Arctic Circle, for walrus hunting when the season began. It was either leave him where he was found, or take him along. The Eskimos were kind-hearted, and decided not to let him die in the wilderness. By the time he was recovered sufficiently to go back, he was too far away from even the nearest trading-post to travel without a guide. The only thing to do was to accompany the hunters. That winter he slept in an igloo, a shelter built of ice blocks and shaped like a beehive. He ate whale blubber and seal meat, delicacies to Eskimos, but awful food for a white man. When the season was over, the tribe went back south. On getting near Fort Sterns, he thought he could finish the journey alone, but he got lost. After several days he was fortunate in finding the trail again. He struggled on and on, suffering incredible hardships, until finally he reached Ten-Mile Creek.

A day after Ken had sat on the hospital cot and heard his father's story, he walked down the main street of the city. To his astonishment he beheld Monte, who, boldly supposing that by this time, Ken and his friends had left that part of the Klondike region, had come back in search of new victims. He had concluded long before that Mr. Warren was dead.

Ken rushed up to him, and with an automatic pistol that looked business-like, held the man a prisoner until one of the Northwest mounted police came along and took charge of him. The fellow was tried later and served a long term for his crimes.

By a strange coincidence, Ken, who was drawn to the cabin to see where his father almost lost his life, discovered gold near-by. He staked a claim with the other scouts and Whipple, and they became wealthy, as the three mines proved very rich.

The End.

* * *

Stranded.

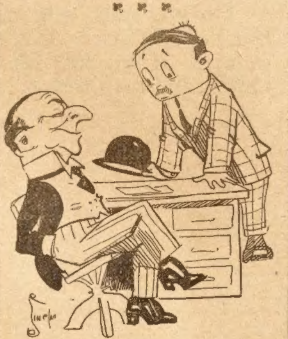
A negro, with an old gray mule hitched to a ramshackle wagon, stood on the incline of Capitol Hill, in Washington, during one of the worst sleet-storms in January.

The old man huddled in his rabbit-skin cap, shivering; the mule was trembling with the cold. Two Congressmen, waiting for a belated car, were attracted by the strange outfit and wondered, as time went on and the negro made no effort to depart, what ailed the old fellow.

One of the Congressmen walked over and said, "Why don't you move on, uncle?"

The old negro pointed a trembling finger at his "team" and replied, "'Cause dis yere mule won't go 'les' I whistle at him, and it's so cold I cyarn't whistle!"

* * *



Henry—"What do you pay for your cigars?"

Winthrop—"When I get one handed to me I always pay a compliment."

* * *

The Wrong One.

Jones was just putting on his overcoat when he casually remarked to Mrs. Jones that he would be working overtime that night.

"Don't wait for me, dear," he remarked. "I may be rather later than usual. But, there, it cannot be helped."

At breakfast next morning he was stonily silent and the stillness of the room was not even broken by the tick-tick of the clock on the mantel.

"Mary, dear," remarked Jones, presently, "there is something the matter with the clock. I wound it up last night, too."

"Oh, no, you didn't!" said Mrs. Jones, icily. "What you did wind up was Teddy's musical box, and when you came to bed at three o'clock this morning it was playing 'Home, Sweet Home.'"

His Hearing Has Been Restored

"Yes, it is I who am speaking." "I can clearly hear every word you say." "No, I am not deaf any more, but I used to be as deaf as a haddock." "Yes, I can hear as well as you can now." "I never expected such relief as this; it is a real pleasure to be able to use the telephone under normal conditions." "Of course, I am positive the cure is complete; there's no doubt about it." "Last Sunday I heard the sermon and singing without any straining, and all this week I've been proving to people that my deafness is gone." "Dr. Coutant did it for me in six weeks after everything else failed, without drugging me, without sticking any electrical devices in my ears and without any loss of time. He has a common-sense, self-treatment method that is devised according to Nature's laws. He explains it in a treatise which he will send gratis and postpaid by addressing George E. Coutant, M. D., 6 L, Station F, New York City." Legions of testimonials, proving remarkable benefit—both sexes, all ages—often after many years of deafness and headnoises.

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18

FIRE! FIRE! FIRE!

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THE STOCK AT THE OLD RETAIL PRICES INVENTORIES ABOUT $25,000.00

On account of our bargain purchase we are going to offer whatever you care to buy AT THE FIRE SALE PRICES NAMED BELOW so the goods will go quick. We don't want any of the brands in our house in four weeks from today. DON'T YOU THINK THEY ARE LOW ENOUGH?

JUST ABOUT HALF THE OLD RETAIL PRICES QUOTED BY
UNCLE SAM DIST. COMPANY

Peach & Honey	Gallon	$1.00	Mountain Corn	Gallon	$1.25
Rock & Rye	Gallon	1.00	Penn. Rye	Gallon	1.30
Apricot Brandy	Gallon	1.00	N. C. Style Corn	Gallon	1.40
Banana Brandy	Gallon	1.00	Golden Rose Rye	Gallon	1.50
Cal. Port Wine	Gallon	1.00	Sweet Mash Corn 90 proof	Gallon	1.60
Zulieka Old Corn 100 proof	Gallon	1.75	Bourbon 90 proof	Gallon	1.60
Maryland Rye, 100 proof	Gallon	1.85	White Corn 90 proof	Gallon	1.60

☞ To give you an idea of the low "Fire Sale Prices" named above, you are told that even the lowest grade: "Mountain" Corn at $1.25 per gallon, is in our opinion equal in value to most any whiskey sold at $2.00 to $2.50 per gallon by the "general run" of mail order houses.

IMPORTANT! At the Fire Sale Prices we reserve the right to substitute, in case any brands are sold out before your order arrives, but of course in such cases we will strive to give better value for the money than you select. If this plan does not meet your approval, so state in remitting and the money will be returned on the very day received if we can't supply the goods desired. Don't ask us to ship less than 4 gallons at the Fire Sale Prices—and if possible buy $10.00, $15.00 or $25.00 lots—it will be money in your pocket, as no one can or will meet our Fire Sale Prices. And furthermore, while the stock of brands is large now, the same will not last over 30 days at the Fire Sale Prices we have named. DON'T BE TOO LATE—SEND A BIG ORDER TODAY. Clip this ad out as it will never be printed again in this paper and address your order plainly to:

S. L. WILLIAMS & CO., FT. SMITH, ARK.

BOYS! Earn $1.00 to $5.00 a Week

selling the BLADE and LEDGER. These are the two greatest papers published and people in every town want to have some one they can buy them from each week. We give you two cents out of each nickle you take in. You don't send us any money until you sell the papers. You sell the papers on Friday afternoons and Saturday mornings. It is easy to sell them and get steady customers. You can send back the headings of all papers you can't sell, and we won't charge you for them. You can't LOSE. Be one of the boys who make steady money each week, and OWN A PAPER ROUTE OF YOUR OWN. Just fill out the blank below and we will send you a complete agent's outfit and a letter telling you just how to sell the papers and what to say. We tell you exactly how to get customers. It is easy. GET THE JOB BEFORE SOME OTHER BOY BEATS YOU!

.......................Fill this out and send it to us today.......................

W. D. BOYCE CO.
500 Dearborn Ave.
Chicago, Ill. Ad.2
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NAME...

Street or R. F. D. No...

Age.. State..........

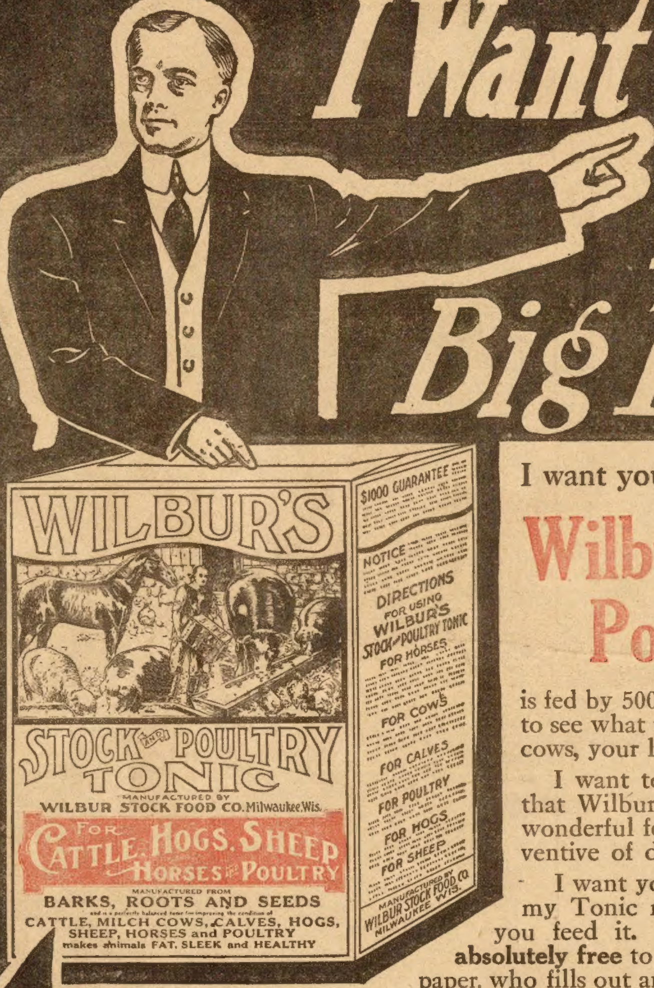
The Male Boy.

Governor Marshall of Indiana said the other day that he who demands special privileges of the Government is a beggar.

"Millionaire or not," said the Governor to a reporter afterward, "the man who holds out his hand for help begs. The fact is self-evident. It needs no proof. Even to state it seems superiority—seems like the shout of young Benedick, who entered his club roaring:

"'Hurray! A young son! It's a boy!'"

I Want to Send You This Big Box Free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WILBUR STOCK FOOD CO. Milwaukee, Wis.
FOR CATTLE, HOGS, SHEEP HORSES AND POULTRY
MANUFACTURED FROM
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and is a perfectly balanced tonic for improving the condition of
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DIRECTIONS FOR USING WILBUR'S STOCK AND POULTRY TONIC
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MANUFACTURED BY WILBUR STOCK FOOD CO. MILWAUKEE WIS.

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is fed by 500,000 stock raisers daily. I want you to see what it does for your horses, your milch cows, your hogs, your sheep and your poultry.

I want to prove to you beyond all doubt, that Wilbur's Stock and Poultry Tonic is a wonderful feed saver, fattener and positive preventive of disease.

I want you to find out by actual test that my Tonic makes money for you every time you feed it. That's why I'll send this big box **absolutely free** to you and to every reader of this paper, who fills out and sends me coupon shown below.

I don't want you to pay me a cent for this big full size box, now or at any other time.

I don't want you to do anything to earn it.

It is not a premium, but a gift, and my object in giving it to you is to let you prove to your own satisfaction that it is a feed saver and money maker for you. Is my offer fair?

Do you risk one cent by accepting this big box free? Is it worth a two-cent stamp? If so, just fill out the coupon below, and mail today.

Read What Dr. Kremer Says!

Wilbur Stock Food Co., Milwaukee, Wis. Madison, Ind., June 29, 1912.

Gentlemen:—I received the lot of Stock and Poultry Tonic last spring. I am pleased to inform you in behalf of your future customers, that I now know why it pays to feed Wilbur's Stock and Poultry Tonic. I have used almost every known kind of so-called "Stock Tonics" sold in this section and was disgusted on ever trying any other, but as I had never tried Wilbur's, I decided as a matter of justice, to give it a thorough test. The results obtained by feeding it with a mixture of crushed corn, bran and "ship-stuff" to my two fine driving horses is phenomenal, for never before have they "shed" their old coat of hair so early and looked so slick, healthy and vigorous as this spring and summer. I have fed it to my eighteen hens and the results obtained in health and quantity of eggs is double to that of former years. This all aroused my curiosity to the extent that I concluded to test its formula and I find it contains all the ingredients specified therein, and in accordance with our Materia Medica comprises some of the best reconstructive tonics, alteratives, laxatives, blood tonic and purifier. Yours sincerely,

NICHOLAS A. KREMER, D. V. Sc., M. D.
Cor. 2nd and Walnut Sts., Madison, Ind.

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E. B. Marshall *President*

WILBUR STOCK FOOD CO., 561 Huron St., Milwaukee, Wis.

12F

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